

Hobsbawm

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Programme, myth, reality

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E. J. HOBSBAWM

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CHAPTER 1

The nation as novelty: from revolution to liberalism

The basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity. This is now well understood, but the opposite assumption, that national identification is somehow so natural, primary and permanent as to precede history, is so widely held that it may be useful to illustrate the modernity of the vocabulary of the subject itself. The Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy, whose various editions have been scrutinized for this purpose[1] does not use the terminology of state, nation and language in the modern manner before its edition of 1884. Here, for the first time, we learn that the *lengua nacional* is 'the official and literary language of a country, and the one generally spoken in that country, as distinct from dialects and the languages of other nations'. The entry under 'dialect' establishes the same relation between it and the national language. Before 1884 the word *nación* simply meant 'the aggregate of the inhabitants of a province, a country or a kingdom' and also 'a foreigner'. But now it was given as 'a State or political body which recognizes a supreme centre of common government' and also 'the territory constituted by that state and its individual inhabitants, considered as a whole', and henceforth the element of a common and supreme state is central to such definitions, at least in the Iberian world. The *nación* is the 'conjunto de los habitantes de un país *regido por un mismo gobierno*' (emphasis added).[2] The *nação* of the (recent) *Enciclopé-*

1 Lluis Garcia i Sevilla, 'Llengua, nació i estat al diccionario de la real academia espanyola' (*L'Avenç*, 16 May 1979, pp. 50–5).

2 *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana* (Barcelona 1907–34), vol. 37, pp. 854–67: 'nación'.

dia Brasileira Mérito[3] is 'the community of the citizens of a state, living under the same regime or government and having a communion of interests; the collectivity of the inhabitants of a territory with common traditions, aspirations and interests, *and subordinated to a central power which takes charge of maintaining the unity of the group* (emphasis added); the people of a state, excluding the governing power'. Moreover, in the Dictionary of the Spanish Academy the final version of 'the nation' is not found until 1925 when it is described as 'the collectivity of persons who have the same ethnic origin and, in general, speak the same language and possess a common tradition'.

Gobierno, the government, is not therefore specifically linked with the concept of *nación* until 1884. For indeed, as philology would suggest, the first meaning of the word 'nation' indicates origin or descent: 'naissance, extraction, rang' to quote a dictionary of ancient French, which cites Froissart's 'je fus retourné au pays de ma nation en la conté de Haynnau' (I was returned to the land of my birth/origin in the county of Hainault).[4] And, insofar as origin or descent are attached to a body of men, it could hardly be those who formed a state (unless in the case of rulers or their kin). Insofar as it was attached to a territory, it was only fortuitously a political unit, and never a very large one. For the Spanish dictionary of 1726 (its first edition) the word *patria* or, in the more popular usage, *tierra*, 'the homeland' meant only 'the place, township or land where one is born', or 'any region, province or district of any lordship or state'. This narrow sense of *patria* as what modern Spanish usage has had to distinguish from the broad sense as *patria chica*, 'the little fatherland', is pretty universal before the nineteenth century, except among the classically educated, with a knowledge of ancient Rome. Not until 1884 did *tierra* come to be attached to a state; and not until 1925 do we hear the emotional note of modern patriotism, which defines *patria* as 'our own nation, with the sum total of material and immaterial things, past, present and future that enjoy the loving loyalty of patriots'.

[3] (São Paulo–Rio–Porto Alegre 1958–64), vol. 13, p. 581.

[4] L. Curne de Sainte Pelaye, *Dictionnaire historique de l'ancien langage françois* (Niort n.d.), 8 vols.; 'nation'.

Admittedly, nineteenth-century Spain was not exactly in the vanguard of ideological progress, but Castile – and we are talking about the Castilian language – was one of the earliest European kingdoms to which it is not totally unrealistic to attach the label 'nation-state'. At any rate it may be doubted whether eighteenth-century Britain and France were 'nation-states' in a very different sense. The development of its relevant vocabulary may therefore have a general interest.

In Romance languages the word 'nation' is indigenous. Elsewhere, insofar as it is used, it is a foreign loan. This allows us to trace distinctions in the usage more clearly. Thus in High and Low German the word *Volk* (people) clearly has some of the same associations today as the words derived from 'natio', but the interaction is complex. It is clear that in medieval Low German the term (*natie*), insofar as it is used – and one would guess from its Latin origin it would hardly be used except among the literate or those of royal, noble or gentle birth – does not yet have the connotation *Volk*, which it only begins to acquire in the sixteenth century. It means, as in medieval French, birth and descent group (*Geschlecht*)[5]

As elsewhere, it develops in the direction of describing larger self-contained groups such as guilds or other corporations which require to be distinguished from others with whom they coexist: hence the 'nations' as a synonym for foreigner, as in Spanish, the 'nations' of foreign merchants ('foreign communities, especially of traders, living in a city and enjoying privileges there'),[6] the familiar 'nations' of students in ancient universities. Hence also the less familiar 'a regiment from the nation of Luxemburg'.[7] However, it seems clear that the evolution could tend to stress the place or territory of origin – the *pays natal* of one old French definition which readily becomes, at least in the minds of later lexicographers the equivalent of 'province',[8] while others stress rather the common descent group, and thus move into the direction of ethnicity, as in

[5] Dr E. Verwijs and Dr J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek*, vol. 4 (The Hague 1899), col. 2078.

[6] *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, vol. 9 (The Hague 1913), cols. 1586–90.

[7] Verwijs and Verdam, *Middelenderlandsch Woordenboek*, vol. 4.

[8] L. Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du 16e siècle*, vol. 5 (Paris 1961), p. 400.

the Dutch insistence on the primary meaning of *natie* as 'the totality of men reckoned to belong to the same "stam"'.

Either way, the problem of the relation of even such an extended but indigenous 'nation' to the state remained puzzling, for it seemed evident that in ethnic, linguistic or any other terms, most states of any size were not homogeneous, and could therefore not simply be equated with nations. The Dutch dictionary specifically singles out as a peculiarity of the French and English that they use the word 'nation' to mean the people belonging to a state even when not speaking the same language.[9] A most instructive discussion of this puzzle comes from eighteenth-century Germany.[10] For the encyclopedist Johann Heinrich Zedler in 1740 the nation, in its real and original meaning meant a united number of *Bürger* (it is best, in mid-eighteenth-century Germany, to leave this word its notorious ambiguity) who share a body of customs, mores and laws. From this it follows that it can have no territorial meaning, since members of different nations (divided by 'differences in ways of life – *Lebensarten* – and customs') can live together in the same province, even quite a small one. If nations had an intrinsic connection with territory, the Wends in Germany would have to be called Germans, which they patently are not. The illustration naturally comes to the mind of a Saxon scholar, familiar with the last – and still surviving – Slav population within linguistic Germany, which it does not yet occur to him to label with the question-begging term 'national minority'. For Zedler the word to describe the totality of the people of all 'nations' living within the same province or state is *Volck*. But, alas for terminological tidiness, in practice the term 'Nation' is often used in he same sense as 'Volck'; and sometimes as a synonym for 'estate' of society (*Stand*, *ordo*) and sometimes for any other association or society (*Gesellschaft*, *societas*).

Whatever the 'proper and original' or any other meaning of 'nation', the term is clearly still quite different from its modern meaning. We may thus, without entering further into the matter,

9 *Woordenboek* (1913), col. 1588.

10 John. Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*..., vol. 23 (Leipzig–Halle 1740, repr. Graz 1961), cols. 901–3.

accept that in its modern and basically political sense the concept *nation* is historically very young. Indeed, this is underlined by another linguistic monument, the *New English Dictionary* which pointed out in 1908, that the old meaning of the word envisaged mainly the ethnic unit, but recent usage rather stressed 'the notion of political unity and independence'.[11]

Given the historical novelty of the modern concept of 'the nation', the best way to understand its nature, I suggest, is to follow those who began systematically to operate with this concept in their political and social discourse during the Age of Revolution, and especially, under the name of 'the principle of nationality' from about 1830 onwards. This excursus into *Begriffsgeschichte* is not easy, partly because, as we shall see, contemporaries were too unselfconscious about their use of such words, and partly because the same word simultaneously meant, or could mean, very different things.

The primary meaning of 'nation', and the one most frequently ventilated in the literature, was political. It equated 'the people' and the state in the manner of the American and French Revolutions, an equation which is familiar in such phrases as 'the nation-state', the 'United Nations', or the rhetoric of late-twentieth-century presidents. Early political discourse in the USA preferred to speak of 'the people', 'the union', 'the confederation, 'our common land', 'the public', 'public welfare' or 'the community' in order to avoid the centralizing and unitary implications of the term 'nation' against the rights of the federated states.[12] For it was, or certainly soon became, part of the concept of the nation in the era of the Revolutions that it should be, in the French phrase, 'one and indivisible'.[13] The 'nation' so considered, was the body of citizens

[11] *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. VII (Oxford 1933), p. 30.

[12] John J. Lalor (ed.), *Cyclopedia of Political Science* (New York 1889), vol. II, p. 932: 'Nation'. The relevant entries are largely reprinted, or rather translated, from earlier French works.

[13] 'It would follow from this definition that a nation is destined to form only one state and that it constitutes one indivisible whole' (*ibid.* p. 923). The definition from which this 'would follow' is that a nation is 'an aggregate of men speaking the same language, having the same customs, and endowed with certain moral qualities which distinguish them from other groups of a like nature'. This is one of the numerous exercises in the art of begging questions to which nationalist argument has so often been prone.

whose collective sovereignty constituted them a state which was their political expression. For, whatever else a nation was, the element of citizenship and mass participation or choice was never absent from it. John Stuart Mill did not merely define the nation by its possession of national sentiment. He also added that the members of a nationality 'desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively'.[14] We observe without surprise that Mill discusses the idea of nationality not in a separate publication as such, but, characteristically – and briefly – in the context of his little treatise on Representative Government, or democracy.

The equation nation = state = people, and especially sovereign people, undoubtedly linked nation to territory, since structure and definition of states were now essentially territorial. It also implied a multiplicity of nation-states so constituted, and this was indeed a necessary consequence of popular self-determination. As the French Declaration of Rights of 1795 put it:

> Each people is independent and sovereign, whatever the number of individuals who compose it and the extent of the territory it occupies. This sovereignty is inalienable.[15]

But it said little about what constituted a 'people'. In particular there was no logical connection between the body of citizens of a territorial state on one hand, and the identification of a 'nation' on ethnic, linguistic or other grounds or of other characteristics which allowed collective recognition of group membership. Indeed, it has been argued that the French Revolution 'was completely foreign to the principle or feeling of nationality; it was even hostile to it' for this reason.[16] As the Dutch lexicographer noted perceptively, language had nothing to do *in principle* with being English or French, and indeed, as we shall see, French experts were to fight

[14] J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government* (Everyman edition, London 1910), pp. 359–66.

[15] It may be observed that there is no reference to the right of peoples to sovereignty and independence in the Declarations of Rights of 1789 or 1793. See Lucien Jaume, *Le Discours jacobin et la démocratie* (Paris 1989), Appendices 1–3, pp. 407–14. However, O. Dann and J. Dinwiddy (eds.), *Nationalism in the Age of the French Revolution* (London 1988), p. 34, for the same view in 1793.

[16] Maurice Block, 'Nationalities, principle of' in J. Lalor (ed.), *Cyclopedia of Political Science*, vol. II, p. 939.

stubbornly against any attempt to make the spoken language a criterion of nationality which, they argued, was determined purely by French citizenship. The language Alsatians or Gascons spoke remained irrelevant to their status as members of the French people.

Indeed, if 'the nation' had anything in common from the popular-revolutionary point of view, it was not, in any fundamental sense, ethnicity, language and the like, though these could be indications of collective belonging also. As Pierre Vilar has pointed out,[17] what characterized the nation–people as seen from below was precisely that it represented the common interest against particular interests, the common good against privilege, as indeed is suggested by the term Americans used before 1800 to indicate nationhood while avoiding the word itself. Ethnic group differences were from this revolutionary-democratic point of view as secondary as they later seemed to socialists. Patently what distinguished the American colonists from King George and his supporters was neither language nor ethnicity, and conversely, the French Republic saw no difficulty in electing the Anglo-American Thomas Paine to its National Convention.

We cannot therefore read into the revolutionary 'nation' anything like the later nationalist programme of establishing nation-states for bodies defined in terms of the criteria so hotly debated by the nineteenth-century theorists, such as ethnicity, common language, religion, territory and common historical memories (to cite John Stuart Mill yet again).[18] As we have seen, except for a territory whose extent was undefined (and perhaps skin colour) none of these united the new American nation. Moreover, as the 'grande nation' of the French extended its frontiers in the course of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars to areas which were French by none of the later criteria of national belonging, it was clear that none of them were the basis of its constitution.

Nevertheless, the various elements later used to discover definitions of non-state nationality, were undoubtedly present, either

[17] P. Vilar, 'Sobre los fundamentos de las estructuras nacionales' (*Historia*, 16/Extra v (Madrid, April 1978), p. 11.

[18] John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government*, pp. 359–66.

associated with the revolutionary nation or creating problems for it; and the more one and indivisible it claimed to be, the more heterogeneity within it created problems. There is little doubt that for most Jacobins a Frenchman who did not speak French was suspect, and that in practice the ethno-linguistic criterion of nationality was often accepted. As Barère put it in his report on languages to the Committee of Public Safety:

> Who, in the Departments of Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin, has joined with the traitors to call the Prussian and the Austrian on our invaded frontiers? It is the inhabitant of the [Alsatian] countryside, who speaks the same language as our enemies, and who consequently considers himself their brother and fellow-citizen rather than the brother and fellow-citizen of Frenchmen who address him in another language and have other customs.[19]

The French insistence on linguistic uniformity since the Revolution has indeed been marked, and at the time it was quite exceptional. We shall return to it below. But the point to note is, that in theory it was not the native use of the French language that made a person French – how could it when the Revolution itself spent so much of its time proving how few people in France actually used it?[20] – but the willingness to acquire this, among the other liberties, laws and common characteristics of the free people of France. In a sense acquiring French was one of the conditions of full French citizenship (and therefore nationality) as acquiring English became for American citizenship. To illustrate the difference between a basically linguistic definition of nationality and the French, even in its extreme form, let us recall the German philologist whom we shall encounter below convincing the International Statistical Congress of the need to insert a question on language into state censuses (see below pp. 98–9). Richard Böckh, whose influential publications in the 1860s argued that language was the only adequate

[19] Cited in M. de Certeau, D. Julia, and J. Revel, *Une Politique de la langue. La Révolution Française et les patois: L'enquête de l'Abbé Grégoire* (Paris 1975), p. 293. For the general problem of the French Revolution and the national language, see also Renée Balibar and Dominique Laporte, *Le Français national. Politique et pratique de la langue nationale sous la Révolution* (Paris 1974). For the specific problem of Alsace, see E. Philipps, *Les Luttes linguistiques en Alsace jusqu'en 1945* (Strasbourg 1975) and P. Lévy, *Histoire linguistique d'Alsace et de Lorraine* (2 vols., Strasbourg 1929).

[20] De Certeau, Julia and Revel, *Une Politique de la langue*, *passim*.

indicator of nationality, an argument well-suited to German nationalism, since Germans were so widely distributed over central and eastern Europe, found himself obliged to classify the Ashkenazic Jews as Germans, since Yiddish was unquestionably a German dialect derived from medieval German. This conclusion as he was well aware, was not likely to be shared by German anti-Semites. But French revolutionaries, arguing for the integration of Jews into the French nation, would neither have needed nor understood this argument. From their point of view Sephardic Jews speaking medieval Spanish and Ashkenazic ones speaking Yiddish – and France contained both – were equally French, once they accepted the conditions of French citizenship, which naturally included speaking French. Conversely, the argument that Dreyfus could not 'really' be French because he was of Jewish descent, was rightly understood as challenging the very nature of the French Revolution and its definition of the French nation.

Nevertheless, it is at the point of Barère's report that two quite different concepts of the nation meet: the revolutionary-democratic and the nationalist. The equation state = nation = people applied to both, but for nationalists the creation of the political entities which would contain it derived from the prior existence of some community distinguishing itself from foreigners, while from the revolutionary-democratic point of view the central concept was the sovereign citizen-people = state which, in relation to the remainder of the human race, constituted a 'nation'.[21] Nor should we forget that henceforth states, however constituted, would also have to take account of their subjects, for in the Age of Revolution it had become more difficult to rule them. As the Greek liberator Kolokotrones put it, it was no longer true that 'the people thought that kings were gods upon earth and that they were bound to say that what they did was well done'.[22] Divinity no longer hedged them. When Charles X of France revived the ancient ceremony of coronation at Rheims in 1825 and (reluctantly) the

[21] 'In relation to the state, the *citizens* constitute the *people*; in relation to the human race, they constitute the *nation*', J. Hélie, 'Nation, definition of,' in Lalor, *Cyclopedia of Political Science*, vol. II, p. 923.

[22] Quoted in E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789–1848* (London 1962), pp. 91–2.

ceremony of magical healing, a mere 120 people turned up to be cured of scrofula by the royal touch. At the last coronation before him, in 1774, there had been 2,400.[23] As we shall see, after 1870 democratization would make this problem of legitimacy and the mobilization of citizens both urgent and acute. For governments the central item in the equation state = nation = people was plainly the state.

But what was the locus of the nation, or for that matter the equation state = nation = people in whatever order of terms, in the theoretical discourse of those who, after all, impressed their character most firmly on the European nineteenth century, and especially on the period when the 'principle of nationality' changed its map in the most dramatic way, namely the period from 1830 to 1880: the liberal bourgeoisies and their intellectuals? Even had they wanted to, they could not have avoided reflecting on the problem during the fifty years when the European balance of power was transformed by the emergence of two great powers based on the national principle (Germany and Italy), the effective partition of a third on the same grounds (Austria–Hungary after the Compromise of 1867), not to mention the recognition of a number of lesser political entities as independent states claiming the new status as nationally based peoples, from Belgium in the west to the Ottoman successor states in southeast Europe (Greece, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria), and two national revolts of the Poles demanding their reconstitution as what they thought of as a nation-state. Nor did they wish to avoid it. For Walter Bagehot 'nation-making' was the essential content of nineteenth-century evolution.[24]

However, since the number of nation-states in the early nineteenth century was small, the obvious question for enquiring minds was which of the numerous European populations classifiable as a 'nationality' on some ground or another, would acquire a state (or some lesser form of separate political or administrative recognition), and which of the numerous existing states would be imbued with the character of 'nation'. The drawing up of lists of the criteria of potential or actual nationhood essentially served this purpose. It

[23] Marc Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges* (Paris 1924), pp. 402–4.

[24] Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics* (London 1887), ch.III, IV on 'Nation-making'.

seemed obvious that not all states would coincide with nations, nor the other way round. On the one hand, Renan's famous question 'why is Holland a nation, while Hanover and the Grand Duchy of Parma are not?'[25] raised one set of analytical issues. On the other hand John Stuart Mill's observation that the establishment of a national state had to be (a) feasible and (b) desired by the nationality itself, raised another. This was so even for mid-Victorian nationalists who had no doubt at all about the answer to both kinds of question as they concerned their own nationality or the state in which it found itself. For even they found themselves looking at the claims of other nationalities and states with a colder eye.

However, when we get beyond this point we encounter, in nineteenth-century liberal discourse, a surprising degree of intellectual vagueness. This is due not so much to a failure to think the problem of the nation through, as to the assumption that it did not require to be spelled out, since it was already obvious. Hence much of the liberal theory of nations emerges only, as it were, on the margins of the discourse of liberal writers. Moreover, as we shall see, one central area of liberal theoretical discourse made it difficult to consider the 'nation' intellectually at all. Our task in the remainder of this chapter is to reconstruct a coherent liberal bourgeois theory of the 'nation', rather in the manner in which archaeologists reconstruct trade routes from deposits of coins.

The best way may be to begin with the least satisfactory notion of the 'nation', namely the sense in which Adam Smith uses the word in the title of his great work. For in his context it plainly means no more than a territorial state, or, in the words of John Rae, a sharp Scottish mind wandering through early nineteenth-century North America criticizing Smith, 'every separate community, society, nation, state or people (terms which, as far as our subject is concerned, may be considered synonymous)'.[26] Yet the thought of the great liberal political economist must surely be relevant to liberal middle-class thinkers considering the 'nation' from other

25 Ernest Renan, 'What is a nation?' in Afred Zimmern (ed.), *Modern Political Doctrines* (Oxford 1939), p. 192.

26 John Rae, *The Sociological Theory of Capital, being a complete reprint of The New Principles of Political Economy by John Rae* (1834) (ed.) C. W. Mixter (New York 1905), p. 26.

points of view, even if they were not, like John Stuart Mill, economists themselves, or like Walter Bagehot, editors of *The Economist*. Was it, we may ask, historically fortuitous that the classic era of free trade liberalism coincided with that 'nation-making' which Bagehot saw as so central to his century? In other words, did the nation-state have a specific function as such in the process of capitalist development? Or rather: how did contemporary liberal analysts see this function?

For it is evident to the historian that the role of economies defined by state frontiers was large. The nineteenth-century world economy was *international* rather than cosmopolitan. World system theorists have tried to show that capitalism was bred as a global system in one continent and not elsewhere, precisely because of the political pluralism of Europe, which neither constituted nor formed part of a single 'world empire'. Economic development in the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries proceeded on the basis of territorial states, each of which tended to pursue mercantilist policies as a unified whole. Even more obviously, when we speak of world capitalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries we do so in terms of its component national units in the developed world – of British industry, the American economy, German as distinct from French capitalism and so on. During the lengthy period from the eighteenth century to the years following World War II, there seemed to be little space and scope in the global economy for those genuinely extra-territorial, transnational or interstitial units which had played so large a part in the genesis of a capitalist world economy and which are today once again so prominent: for instance, independent mini-states whose economic significance is out of proportion to their size and resources – Lübeck and Ghent in the fourteenth century, Singapore and Hongkong once again today. In fact, looking back over the development of the modern world economy we are inclined to see the phase during which economic development was integrally linked to the 'national economies' of a number of developed territorial states as situated between two essentially transnational eras.

The difficulty for nineteenth-century liberal economists, or liberals who, as might have been expected, accepted the arguments

of classical political economy, was that they could only recognize the economic significance of nations in practice, but not in theory. Classical political economy, and notably Adam Smith's, had been formulated as a critique of the 'mercantile system', i.e. of precisely the system in which governments treated national economies as ensembles to be developed by state effort and policy. Free trade and the free market were directed precisely against this concept of national economic development, which Smith thought he had demonstrated to be counter-productive. Economic theory was thus elaborated uniquely on the basis of individual units of enterprise – persons or firms – rationally maximizing their gains and minimizing their losses in a market which had no specific spatial extension. At the limit it was, and could not but be, the world market. While Smith was far from opposed to certain functions of government which were relevant to the economy, so far as the general theory of economic growth was concerned, it had no place for the nation, or any collectivity larger than the firm, which, incidentally, it did not bother to investigate much.

Thus J. E. Cairnes, at the peak of the liberal era, even spent ten pages seriously considering the proposition that a theory of international trade was unnecessary, as distinct from any other trade between individuals.[27] He concluded that, while international transactions were undoubtedly becoming steadily easier, there were still enough frictions left to justify separate consideration of the problem of trade between states. The German liberal economist Schönberg doubted whether the concept of 'national income' had any meaning. Those not content with superficial ideas might be tempted to believe this, but they were probably going too far even though estimates of 'national wealth' in monetary terms were mistaken.[28] Edwin Cannan[29] thought Adam Smith's 'nation' consisted only of the collection of individuals living on the territory of a state and considered whether the fact that in a hundred years' time

[27] J. E. Cairnes, *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy Newly Expounded* (London 1874), pp. 355–65.

[28] Dr Gustav Schönberg (ed.), *Handbuch der politischen Oekonomie*, vol. 1 (Tübingen 1882), pp. 158ff.

[29] Edwin Cannan, *History of the Theories of Production and Distribution in English Political Economy from 1776 to 1848* (London 1894), pp. 10ff.

all these people would be dead, made it impossible to speak of the 'nation' as a continuously existing entity. In policy terms this meant the belief that only the allocation of resources through the market was optimal, and that by means of its operation the interests of individuals would automatically produce the interests of the whole – insofar as there was room in theory for such a concept as the interests of the whole community. Conversely, John Rae wrote his 1834 book specifically to demonstrate against Smith that individual and national interests were not identical, i.e. that the principles that guided the individual's pursuit of self-interest did not necessarily maximize the wealth of the nation.[30] As we shall see, those who refused to take to Smith unconditionally were not to be neglected, but their economic theories could not compete with the classical school. The term 'national economy' only appears in Palgrave's *Dictionary of Political Economy* in connection with German economic theory. The term 'nation' itself had disappeared from the equivalent French work of the 1890s.[31]

And yet, even the purest of classical economists were obliged to operate with the concept of a national economy. As the Saint-Simonian Michel Chevalier announced apologetically or tongue-in-cheek in his inaugural lesson as Professor of Political Economy at the Collège de France:

> We are commanded to concern ourselves with the general interests of human societies, and we are not prohibited from considering the particular situation in the society within which we are living.[32]

Or, as Lord Robbins was to put it, once again in relation to classical political economists, 'there is little evidence that they often went beyond the test of national advantage as a criterion of policy, still less that they were prepared to contemplate the dissolution of national bonds'.[33] In short, they neither could nor wanted to get

30 Rae, *The Sociological Theory of Capital.*

31 *Nouveau Dictionnaire d'Economie Politique* (ed.), Léon Say and Joseph Chailley (Paris 1892).

32 Michel Chevalier, *Cours d'economie politique fait au Collège de France*, vol. 1 (Paris 1855), p. 43. The lecture was originally given in 1841.

33 L. Robbins, *The Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy* (2nd edn, London 1977), pp. 9–10. An exception should, however, be made for the genuinely global Bentham.

away from 'the nation', whose progress Porter monitored with self-satisfaction from 1835 onwards because, he thought, one wished 'to ascertain the means by which any community has attained the eminence among nations'. By 'any community' he meant, one need hardly add, 'one's own community'.[34]

How indeed could the economic functions and even benefits of the nation-state be denied? The existence of states with a monopoly of currency and with public finances and therefore fiscal policies and activities was a fact. These economic activities could not be abolished, even by those who wished to eliminate their harmful interventions into the economy. Moreover, even extreme libertarians could accept, with Molinari, that 'the division of humanity into autonomous nations is essentially economic'.[35] For the state – in the post-revolutionary era the nation-state – after all guaranteed the security of property and contracts, and as J. B. Say put it – notoriously no friend to public enterprise – 'no nation has ever attained a level of wealth without being under a regular government'.[36] Government functions could even be rationalized by liberal economics in terms of free competition. Thus Molinari argued that 'the fragmentation of humanity into nations is useful, inasmuch as it develops an extremely powerful principle of economic emulation'.[37] He cited the Great Exhibition of 1851 in support. But even without such justifications, the function of government in economic development was assumed. J. B. Say, who could see no more difference between a nation and its neighbours than between two neighbouring provinces, nevertheless accused France – i.e. the French state and government – of neglecting to develop the country's domestic resources and indulging in foreign conquest instead. In short, no economist of even the most extreme liberal persuasion could overlook or fail to take account of the national economy. Only liberal economists did not like to, or quite know how to, talk about it.

[34] George Richardson Porter, *The progress of the Nation, in its various social and economic relations, from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present time*, 2 pts (London 1836), Preface.

[35] Molinari in *Dictionnaire d'economie politique* (Paris 1854) repr. in Lalor, *Cyclopedia of Political Science*, vol. II, p. 957: 'Nations in political economy'.

[36] *Ibid.* pp. 958–9. [37] *Ibid.* p. 957.

But in countries pursuing national economic development against the superior economy of Britain, Smithian free trade seemed less attractive. There we find no shortage of men who were anxious to talk about the national economy as a whole. The neglected Scottish-Canadian Rae has already been mentioned. He propounded theories which appear to anticipate the import-substituting and technology-importing doctrines of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America in the 1950s. More obviously the great Federalist Alexander Hamilton in the USA linked nation, state and economy, using this link to justify the strong national government he favoured against less centralizing politicians. The list of his 'great national measures' drawn up by the author of the article 'nation' in a later American work of reference is exclusively economic: the foundation of a national bank, national responsibility for state debts, the creation of a national debt, the protection of national manufactures by high tariffs, and compulsory excise.[38] It may be that, as the admiring author suggests, all these measures 'were intended to develop the germ of nationality', or it may be that, as in the case of other Federalists who talked little of the nation and much in economic argument, he felt that the nation would take care of itself if the Federal government took care of economic development: in any case nation implied national economy and its systematic fostering by the state, which in the nineteenth century meant protectionism.

Nineteenth-century American development economists were, in general, too mediocre to make much of a theoretical case for Hamiltonianism, as the miserable Carey and others attempted to do.[39] However, that case was made both lucidly and eloquently by German economists, headed by Friedrich List, who had acquired his ideas, which were frankly inspired by Hamilton, during his stay in the USA in the 1820s, when he had actually taken part in the national economic debates of that period.[40] For List the task of

[38] *Ibid.* p. 933.

[39] Cf. J. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (Oxford 1954), pp. 515–16.

[40] He wrote an *Outline of American Political Economy* (Philadelphia 1827), which anticipates his later views. For List in America see W. Notz 'Friedrich List in Amerika' (*Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, 29, 1925, pp. 199–265 and vol. 22, 1925, pp. 154–82 and 'Frederick List in America' (American Economic Review, 16, 1926, pp. 249–65).

economics, which Germans henceforth tended to call 'national economy' (Nationaloekonomie) or 'people's economy' (Volkswirthschaft) rather than 'political economy', was to 'accomplish the economic development of the nation and to prepare its entry into the universal society of the future'.[41] One need hardly add that this development would take the form of capitalist industrialization pressed forward by a vigorous bourgeoisie.

However, what is interesting from our point of view about List, and the later 'historical school' of German economists who took him as their inspiration – as did economic nationalists of other countries like Arthur Griffith of Ireland[42] – is that he clearly formulated a characteristic of the 'liberal' concept of the nation which was usually taken for granted. It had to be of sufficient size to form a viable unit of development. If it fell below this threshold, it had no historic justification. This seemed too obvious to require argument, and was rarely argued out. The *Dictionnaire politique* of Garnier-Pagès in 1843 thought it 'ridiculous' that Belgium and Portugal should be independent nations, because they were patently too small.[43] John Stuart Mill justified the quite undeniable nationalism of the Irish on the ground that they were after all, all things considered, 'sufficiently numerous to be capable of constituting a respectable nationality'.[44] Others, among them Mazzini and Cavour, apostles though they were of the principle of nationality, disagreed. Indeed, the *New English Dictionary* itself defined the word 'nation' not just in the usual manner familiarized in Britain by J. S. Mill, but as 'an *extensive* aggregate of persons' with the required characteristics (emphasis added).[45]

Now List stated clearly that

> a large population and an extensive territory endowed with manifold national resources, are essential requirements of the normal nationality ... A nation restricted in the number of its population and in

[41] Friedrich List, *The National System of Political Economy* (London 1885), p. 174.

[42] For a good summary of his views, E. Strauss, *Irish Nationalism and British Democracy* (London 1951), pp. 218–20.

[43] 'Nation' by Elias Regnault, *Dictionnaire politique*, with an introduction by Garnier-Pagès (Paris 1842), pp. 623–5. 'N'y-a-t-il pas quelque chose de dérisoire d'appeler la Belgique une nation?'

[44] *Considerations on Representative Government* in *Utilitarianism*, p. 365.

[45] *Oxford English Dictionary*, VII, p. 30.

> territory, especially if it has a separate language, can only possess a crippled literature, crippled institutions for promoting art and science. A small state can never bring to complete perfection within its territory the various branches of production.[46]

The economic benefits of large-scale states (*Grossstaaten*), thought Professor Gustav Cohn, were demonstrated by the history of Britain and France. They were no doubt less than those of a single global economy, but world unity, unfortunately, was not attainable as yet. In the mean time 'everything to which humanity aspires for the entire human race ... is at this point already (*zunächst einmal*) achieved for a significant fraction of humanity, i.e. for 30–60 millions'. And so 'it follows that the future of the civilized world will, for a long time to come, take the form of the creation of large states (*Grossstaatenbildung*)'.[47] We note, incidentally, the constant assumption, to which we shall return below, of 'nations' as a second-best to world unity.

Two consequences followed from this thesis, which was almost universally accepted by serious thinkers on the subject, even when they did not formulate it as explicitly as did the Germans who had some historical reasons for doing so.

First, it followed that the 'principle of nationality' applied in practice only to nationalities of a certain size. Hence the otherwise startling fact that Mazzini, the apostle of this principle, did not envisage independence for Ireland. As for even smaller nationalities or potential nationalities – Sicilians, Bretons, Welsh – their claims need be taken even less seriously. In fact, the word *Kleinstaaterei* (the system of mini-states) was deliberately derogatory. It was what German nationalists were against. The word 'Balkanization', derived from the division of the territories formerly in the Turkish empire into various small independent states, still retains its negative connotation. Both terms belonged to the vocabulary of political insults. This 'threshold principle' is excellently illustrated by the map of the future Europe of nations which Mazzini himself drew up in 1857: it comprised a bare dozen states and federations, only one of which (needless to say Italy) would not be obviously

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 175–6.

[47] Gustav Cohn, *Grundlegung der Nationaloekonomie*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart 1885), pp. 447–9.

classified as multi-national by later criteria.[48] The 'principle of nationality' in the Wilsonian formulation which dominated the peace treaties after World War I, produced a Europe of twenty-six states – twenty-seven if we add the Irish Free State which was shortly to be established. I merely add that a recent study of regionalist movements in western Europe alone counts forty-two of them,[49] thus demonstrating what can happen once the 'threshold principle' is abandoned.

The point to note, however, is that in the classical period of liberal nationalism nobody would have dreamed of abandoning it. Self-determination for nations applied only to what were considered to be viable nations: culturally, and certainly economically (whatever exactly viability meant). To this extent Mazzini's and Mill's idea of national self-determination was fundamentally different from President Wilson's. We shall consider the reasons for the change from one to the other below. However, it may be worth noting *en passant* even here that the 'threshold principle' was not entirely abandoned even in the Wilsonian era. Between the wars the existence of Luxemburg and Liechtenstein remained a slight embarrassment, however welcome these polities were to philatelists. Nobody felt happy about the existence of the Free City of Danzig, not only in the two neighbouring states each of which wanted it within its territory, but more generally among those who felt that no city-state could be viable in the twentieth century as it had been in Hanseatic days. The inhabitants of rump Austria almost unanimously desired integration into Germany, because they simply could not believe that a small state such as theirs was independently viable as an economy ('lebensfähig'). It is only since 1945, and even more since decolonization, that we have made way in the community of nations for entities like Dominica or the Maldives or Andorra.

The second consequence is that the building of nations was seen inevitably as a process of expansion. This was another reason for the anomaly of the Irish case or of any other purely separatist

[48] See Denis Mack Smith (ed.), *Il Risorgimento* (Bari 1968), p. 422.

[49] Jochen Blaschke (ed.), *Handbuch der westeuropäischen Regionalbewegungen* (Frankfurt 1980).

nationalism. As we have seen, it was accepted in theory that social evolution expanded the scale of human social units from family and tribe to county and canton, from the local to the regional, the national and eventually the global. Nations were therefore, as it were, in tune with historical evolution only insofar as they extended the scale of human society, other things being equal.

> If our doctrine were to be summed up in the form of a proposition, we should perhaps say that, generally, the principle of nationalities is legitimate when it tends to unite, in a compact whole, scattered groups of population, and illegitimate when it tends to divide a state.[50]

In practice this meant that national movements were expected to be movements for national *unification* or expansion. All Germans and Italians thus hoped to come together in one state, as did all Greeks. Serbs would merge with Croats into a single Yugoslavia (for which there was no historical precedent whatever), and beyond this the dream of a Balkan Federation haunted the seekers after a yet larger unity. It remained a commitment of the communist movements until after World War II. Czechs would merge with Slovaks, Poles would combine with Lithuanians and Ruthenes – in fact, they had already formed a single large state in pre-partition Poland – Romanians of Moldavia would fuse with those of Wallachia and Transylvania, and so on. This was evidently incompatible with definitions of nations as based on ethnicity, language or common history, but, as we have seen, these were not the decisive criteria of liberal nation-making. In any case, nobody ever denied the actual multinationality or multilinguality or multiethnicity of the oldest and most unquestioned nation-states, e.g. Britain, France and Spain.

That 'nation-states' would be nationally heterogeneous in this way was accepted all the more readily, as there were many parts of Europe and much of the rest of the world where nationalities were so obviously mixed up on the same territory, that a purely spatial unscrambling of them seemed to be quite unrealistic. This was to be the basis of interpretations of nationality such as the later Austro-Marxist one, which attached it not to territory but to people. Nor

[50] Maurice Block in Lalor, *Cyclopedia of Political Science*, vol. II, p. 941.

was it an accident that the initiative in this matter within the Austrian social democratic party came largely from the Slovenes, who lived in an area where Slovene and German settlements, often existing as enclaves within enclaves or border zones of uncertain and shifting identification, were particularly hard to disentangle.[51] However, the national heterogeneity of nation-states was accepted, above all, because it seemed clear that small, and especially small and backward, nationalities had everything to gain by merging into greater nations, and making their contributions to humanity through these. 'Experience', said Mill, articulating the consensus of sensible observers, 'proves that it is possible for one nationality to merge and be absorbed into another.' For the backward and inferior this would be so much gain:

> Nobody can suppose that it is not more beneficial for a Breton or a Basque of French Navarre to be ... a member of the French nationality, admitted on equal terms to all the privileges of French citizenship ... than to sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times, revolving in his own little mental orbit, without participation or interest in the general movement of the world. The same remark applies to the Welshman or the Scottish highlander as members of the British nation.[52]

Once it was accepted that an independent or 'real' nation also had to be a viable nation by the criteria then accepted, it also followed that some of the smaller nationalities and languages were doomed to disappear as such. Frederick Engels has been bitterly assailed as a great-German chauvinist for predicting the disappearance of the Czechs as a people and making uncomplimentary remarks about the future of a good few other peoples.[53] He was indeed proudly German, and inclined to compare his people favourably with others except in respect of its revolutionary tradition. He was also, without the slightest doubt, totally wrong about the Czechs, and about some other peoples. However, it is

51 For the contribution of Etbin Kristan to the Brünn (Brno) Congress of the party, which elaborated its national programme, see Georges Haupt, Michel Lowy and Claudie Weill, *Les Marxistes et la question nationale 1848–1914* (Paris 1937), pp. 204–7.

52 Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government*, pp. 363–4.

53 Cf. Roman Rosdolsky, 'Friedrich Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen Völker"' (*Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 4/1964, pp. 87–282).

sheer anachronism to criticize him for his essential stance, which was shared by every impartial mid-nineteenth-century observer. *Some* small nationalities and languages had no independent future. So much was generally accepted, even by people far from hostile to national liberation in principle, or practice.

There was nothing chauvinist in such a general attitude. It did not imply any hostility to the languages and culture of such collective victims to the laws of progress (as they would certainly have been called then). On the contrary, where the supremacy of the state-nationality and the state-language were not an issue, the major nation could cherish and foster the dialects and lesser languages within it, the historic and folkloric traditions of the lesser communities it contained, if only as proof of the range of colours on its macro-national palette. Moreover, small nationalities or even nation-states which accepted their integration into the larger nation as something positive – or, if one prefers, which accepted the laws of progress – did not recognize any irreconcilable differences between micro-culture and macro-culture either, or were even reconciled to the loss of what could not be adapted to the modern age. It was the Scots and not the English who invented the concept of the 'North Briton' after the Union of 1707.[54] It was the speakers and champions of Welsh in nineteenth-century Wales who doubted whether their own language, so powerful a medium for religion and poetry, could serve as an all-purpose language of culture in the nineteenth-century world – i.e. who assumed the necessity and advantages of bilingualism.[55] Doubtless they were not unaware of the possibilities of all-British careers for the English-speaking Welshman, but this did not diminish their emotional bond with ancient tradition. This is evident even among those who reconciled themselves to the eventual disappearance of the idiom, like the Rev. Griffiths of the Dissenting College, Brecknock, who merely asked for natural evolution to be left to take its course:

[54] See Linda Colley, 'Whose nation? Class and national consciousness in Britain 1750–1830' (*Past and Present*, 113, 1986), pp. 96–117.

[55] Ieuan Gwynedd Jones, 'Language and community in nineteenth-century Wales' in David Smith (ed.), *A People and a Proletariat: Essays in the History of Wales 1780–1980* (London 1980), pp. 41–71, esp. pp. 59–63.

> Let it [the Welsh language] die fairly, peacefully and reputably. Attached to it as we are, few would wish to postpone its euthanasy. But no sacrifice would be deemed too great to prevent its being murdered.[56]

Forty years later, another member of a small nationality, the socialist theoretician Karl Kautsky – by origin a Czech – talked in similarly resigned, but not dispassionate, terms:

> National languages will be increasingly confined to domestic use, and even there they will tend to be treated like an old piece of inherited family furniture, something that we treat with veneration even though it has not much practical use.[57]

But these were problems of the smaller nationalities whose independent future seemed problematic. The English hardly gave a thought to the preoccupations of the Scots and the Welsh, as they gloried in the home-grown exoticisms of the British Isles. Indeed, as the stage-Irish soon discovered, who welcomed lesser nationalities which did not challenge the greater, all the more, the more unlike the English they behaved: the thicker the Irishness or Scottishness were laid on with the trowel. Similarly Pangerman nationalists actually encouraged the production of literature in Low German or Frisian, since these were safely reduced to appendages rather than competitors with High German, nationalist Italians prided themselves on Belli, Goldoni and songs in Neapolitan. For that matter Francophone Belgium did not object to Belgians who talked and wrote Flemish. It was the *Flamingants* who resisted French. There were indeed cases where the leading nation or *Staatsvolk* tried actively to suppress minor languages and cultures, but until the late nineteenth century this was rare outside France.

Some people or nationalities were thus destined never to become full nations. Others had attained, or would attain, full nationhood. But which had a future and which did not? The debates on what constituted the characteristics of a nationality – territorial, linguistic, ethnical, etc. – did not help much. The 'threshold principle' was naturally more useful, since it eliminated a number of small

[56] Inquiry on Education in Wales, *Parliamentary Paper*, 1847, XXVII, part II (Report on the Counties of Brecknock, Cardigan and Radnor), p. 67.

[57] Haupt, Lowy and Weill, *Les Marxistes*, p. 122.

peoples, but, as we have seen, it was not decisive either, since there existed unquestioned 'nations' of quite modest size, not to mention national movements like the Irish, about whose capacity to form viable nation-states there were divided opinions. The immediate point of Renan's question about Hanover and the Grand Duchy of Parma was, after all, to contrast them not with *any* nations but with other nation-states of the same modest order of magnitude, with the Netherlands or Switzerland. As we shall see, the emergence of national movements with mass support, demanding attention, would call for substantial revisions of judgment, but in the classic era of liberalism few of them, outside the Ottoman empire, actually as yet seemed to demand recognition as independent sovereign states, as distinct from demanding various kinds of autonomy. The Irish case was, as usual, anomalous in this respect also – at any rate it became so with the appearance of the Fenians who demanded an Irish Republic which could not but be independent from Britain.

In practice there were only three criteria which allowed a people to be firmly classed as a nation, always provided it was sufficiently large to pass the threshold. The first was its historic association with a current state or one with a fairly lengthy and recent past. Hence there was little dispute about the existence of an English or French nation-people, a (Great) Russian people or the Poles, and little dispute outside Spain about a Spanish nation with well-understood national characteristics.[58] For given the identification of nation with state, it was natural for foreigners to assume that the only people in a country were those belonging to the state-people, a habit which still irritates the Scots.

The second criterion was the existence of a long-established cultural elite, possessing a written national literary and administrative vernacular. This was the basis of the Italian and German claims to nationhood, although the respective 'peoples' had no single state with which they could identify. In both cases national identification was in consequence strongly linguistic, even though in neither case was the national language spoken for everyday purposes by more

[58] Within Spain the cultural, linguistic and institutional differences between the peoples of the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile were evident. In the Spanish empire, from which Aragon was excluded, even more so.

than a small minority – for Italy it has been estimated at 2½% at the moment of unification[59] – while the rest spoke various and often mutually incomprehensible idioms.[60]

The third criterion, it must unfortunately be said, was a proven capacity for conquest. There is nothing like being an imperial people to make a population conscious of its collective existence as such, as Friedrich List well knew. Besides, for the nineteenth century conquest provided the Darwinian proof of evolutionary success as a social species.

Other candidates for nationhood were plainly not excluded *a priori*, but neither was there any *a priori* presumption in their favour. Their safest course was probably to belong to some political entity which was, by the standards of nineteenth-century liberalism, anomalous, obsolete, and doomed by history and progress. The Ottoman empire was the most obvious evolutionary fossil of this kind, but so, it was increasingly evident, was the Habsburg empire.

Such, then, were the conceptions of nation and nation-state as seen by the ideologists of the era of triumphant bourgeois liberalism: say from 1830 to 1880. They were part of liberal ideology in two ways. First, because the development of nations was unquestionably a phase in human evolution or progress from the small group to the larger, from family to tribe to region, to nation and, in the last instance, to the unified world of the future in which, to quote the superficial and therefore typical G. Lowes Dickinson, 'the barriers of nationality which belong to the infancy of the race will melt and dissolve in the sunshine of science and art'.[61]

That world would be unified even linguistically. A single world language, no doubt coexisting with national languages reduced to the domestic and sentimental role of dialects, was in the minds of

59 Tullio de Mauro, *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (Bari 1963), p. 41.

60 'Obwohl sie alle in einem Reich "Deutscher Nation" nebeneinander lebten, darf nichts darüber hinwegtäuschen, dasz ihnen sogar die gemeinsame Umgangssprache fehlte.' Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Munich 1987), p. 50.

61 B. Porter, *Critics of Empire. British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa, 1895–1914* (London 1968), p. 331, citing G. Lowes Dickinson's *A Modern Symposium* (1908).

both President Ulysses S. Grant and Karl Kautsky.[62] Such predictions, as we now know, were not entirely beside the mark. The attempts to construct artificial world languages which were made from the 1880s, following the international telegraphic and signalling codes of the 1870s, were indeed unsuccessful, even though one of them, Esperanto, still survives among small groups of enthusiasts, and under the protection of some regimes deriving from the socialist internationalism of the period. On the other hand Kautsky's sensible scepticism of such efforts and his prediction that one of the major state languages would be transformed into a *de facto* world language, has indeed been proved correct. English has become that global language, even though it supplements rather than replaces national languages.

Thus in the perspective of liberal ideology, the nation (i.e. the viable large nation) was the stage of evolution reached in the mid-nineteenth century. As we have seen, the other face of the coin 'nation as progress' was therefore, logically, the assimilation of smaller communities and peoples to larger ones. This did not necessarily imply the abandonment of old loyalties and sentiments, though of course it could. The geographically and socially mobile, who had nothing very desirable to look back upon in their past, might be quite ready to do so. This was notably the case with many middle-class Jews in the countries which offered total equality through assimilation – Paris was worth a mass to more than King Henry IV – until they discovered from the end of the century on, that an unlimited readiness to assimilate was not enough, if the receiving nation was not prepared to accept the assimilee fully. On the other hand it must not be forgotten that the USA was by no means the only state freely offering membership of a 'nation' to anybody who wanted to join it, and 'nations' accepted open entry more readily than classes. The generations before 1914 are full of great-nation chauvinists whose fathers, let alone mothers, did not speak the language of their sons' chosen people, and whose names, Slav or Magyarized German or Slav testified to their choice. The rewards of assimilation could be substantial.

[62] For a relevant quotation from President Grant's Inaugural, see E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848–1875* (London 1975), epigraphs to ch. 3.

But the modern nation was part of liberal ideology in another way. It was linked to the remainder of the great liberal slogans by long association rather than by logical necessity: as liberty and equality are to fraternity. To put it another way, because the nation itself was historically novel, it was opposed by conservatives and traditionalists, and therefore attracted their opponents. The association between the two lines of thought may be illustrated by the example of a typical pan-German from Austria, born in that area of acute national conflict, Moravia. Arnold Pichler,[63] who served the Vienna police with a devotion unbroken by political transformations from 1901 to 1938, was, and to some extent remained, all his life a passionate nationalist German, anti-Czech and anti-Semitic – though he drew the line at putting all Jews into concentration camps, as fellow anti-Semites suggested.[64] At the same time he was a passionate anticlerical and even a liberal in politics; at all events he contributed to the most liberal of Vienna's daily papers in the first republic. In his writings nationalism and eugenical reasoning go together with an enthusiasm for the industrial revolution and, more surprisingly, for its creation of a body of 'citizens of the world' (Weltbürger) ... which ... remote from small-town provincialism and horizons bounded by the church steeple' opened up the entire globe to those previously imprisoned in their regional corners.[65]

Such, then, was the concept of 'nation' and 'nationalism' as seen by liberal thinkers in the heyday of bourgeois liberalism, which was also the era when the 'principle of nationality' first became a major issue in international politics, As we shall see, it differed in one fundamental respect from the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination, which is also, in theory, the Leninist one, and which dominated the debate on these matters from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, and still does. It was not unconditional. In this respect it also differed from the radical-democratic view, as put in the French Revolution's Declaration of Rights cited above, which specifically rejected the 'threshold principle'.

[63] Franz Pichler, *Polizeihofrat P. Ein treuer Diener seienes ungetreuen Staates. Wiener Polizeidienst 1901–1938* (Vienna 1984). I thank Clemens Heller for this reference.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 19. [65] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

However, in practice the mini-peoples whose right to sovereignty and self-determination were thus guaranteed were not generally permitted by their larger and more rapacious neighbours to exercise either, nor did most of them contain many sympathizers with the principles of 1795. One thinks of the (conservative) free mountain cantons of Switzerland, which could hardly be far from the minds of the readers of Rousseau who drafted Declarations of the Rights of Man in that era. The days of left-wing autonomist or independence movements in such communities had not yet come.

From the point of view of liberalism, and – as the example of Marx and Engels demonstrates, not only of liberalism – the case for 'the nation' was that it represented a stage in the historical development of human society, and the case for the establishment of any particular nation-state, irrespective of the subjective feelings of the members of the nationality concerned, or the personal sympathies of the observer, depended on whether it could be shown to fit in with or to advance historical evolution and progress.[66] The universal bourgeois admiration for Scots highlanders did not, so far as I know, lead a single writer to demand nationhood for them – not even the sentimentalists who mourned the failure of the Stuart restoration under Bonnie Prince Charlie, whose main supporters had been highland clansmen.

But if the only historically justifiable nationalism was that which fitted in with progress, i.e. which enlarged rather than restricted the scale on which human economies, societies and culture operated, what could the defence of small peoples, small languages, small traditions be, in the overwhelming majority of cases, but an expression of conservative resistance to the inevitable advance of history? The small people, language or culture fitted into progress only insofar as it accepted subordinate status to some larger unit or retired from battle to become a repository of nostalgia and other sentiments – in short, accepted the status of old family furniture

[66] Cf. Frederick Engels' letter to Bernstein, 22–5 February 1882 (*Werke*, vol. 35, pp. 278ff.) on the Balkan Slavs: 'And even if these chaps were as admirable as the Scots Highlanders celebrated by Walter Scott – another bunch of terrible cattle-thieves – the most we can do is to condemn the *ways* in which society today treats them. If we were in power *we also* would have to deal with the banditry of these fellows, which is part of their heritage.'

which Kautsky assigned to it. And which, of course, so many of the small communities and cultures of the world looked like accepting. Why, so the educated liberal observer might reason, should the speakers of Gaelic behave differently from the speakers of the Northumberland dialect? Nothing prevented them from being bilingual. English dialect writers chose their idiom not *against* the standard national language, but with the consciousness that both had their value and their place. And if, in the course of time, the local idiom would retreat before the national, or even fade away, as had already happened to some marginal Celtic languages (Cornish and Manx ceased to be spoken in the eighteenth century), then, surely, this was regrettable but perhaps inevitable. They would not die unmourned, but a generation that invented the concept and term of 'folklore' could tell the difference between living present and survivals from the past.

To understand the 'nation' of the classical liberal era it is thus essential to bear in mind that 'nation-building', however central to nineteenth-century history, applied only to some nations. And indeed the demand to apply the 'principle of nationality' was not universal either. Both as an international problem and as a domestic political problem it affected only a limited number of peoples or regions, even within multilingual and multiethnic states such as the Habsburg empire, where it clearly dominated politics already. It would not be too much to say that, after 1871 – always excepting the slowly disintegrating Ottoman empire – few people expected any further substantial changes in the map of Europe, and recognized few national problems likely to bring them about, other than the perennial Polish question. And, indeed, outside the Balkans, the only change in the European map between the creation of the German empire and World War I was the separation of Norway from Sweden. What is more, after the national alarums and excursions of the years from 1848 to 1867, it was not too much to suppose that even in Austria–Hungary tempers would cool. That, at all events, is what the officials of the Habsburg empire expected when (rather reluctantly) they decided to accept a resolution of the International Statistical Congress at St Petersburg in 1873 to include a question about language in

future censuses, but proposed to postpone its application until after 1880 to allow time for opinion to grow less agitated.[67] They could not have been more spectacularly mistaken in their prognosis.

It also follows that, by and large, in this period nations and nationalism were not major domestic problems for political entities which had reached the status of 'nation-states', however nationally heterogeneous they were by modern standards, though they were acutely troublesome to non-national empires which were not (anachronistically) classifiable as 'multinational'. None of the European states west of the Rhine as yet faced serious complications on this score, except Britain from that permanent anomaly, the Irish. This is not to suggest that politicians were unaware of Catalans or Basques, Bretons or Flemings, Scots and Welsh, but they were mainly seen as adding to or subtracting from the strength of some statewide political force. The Scots and the Welsh functioned as reinforcements to liberalism, the Bretons and Flemings to traditionalist Catholicism. Of course the political systems of nation-states still benefited from the absence of electoral democracy, which was to undermine the liberal theory and practice of the nation, as it was to undermine so much else in nineteenth-century liberalism.

That is perhaps why the serious theoretical literature about nationalism in the liberal era is small and has a somewhat casual air. Observers like Mill and Renan were relaxed enough about the elements which made up 'national sentiment' – ethnicity – in spite of the Victorians' passionate preoccupation with 'race' – language, religion, territory, history, culture and the rest – because politically it did not much matter, as yet, whether one or the other among these was regarded as more important than the rest. But from the 1880s on the debate about 'the national question' becomes serious and intensive, especially among the socialists, because the political appeal of national slogans to masses of potential or actual voters or supporters of mass political movements was now a matter of real

[67] Emil Brix, *Die Umgangsprachen in Altösterreich zwischen Agitation und Assimilation. Die Sprachenstatistik in den zisleithanischen Volkszählungen 1880–1910* (Vienna–Cologne–Graz 1982).

practical concern. And the debate on such questions as the theoretical criteria of nationhood became passionate, because any particular answer was now believed to imply a particular form of political strategy, struggle and programme. This was a matter of importance not only for governments confronted with various kinds of national agitation or demand, but for political parties seeking to mobilize constituencies on the basis of national, non-national or alternative national appeals. For socialists in central and eastern Europe it made a great deal of difference on what theoretical basis the nation and its future were defined. Marx and Engels, like Mill and Renan, had regarded such questions as marginal. In the Second International such debates were central, and a constellation of eminent figures, or figures with an eminent future, contributed important writings to them: Kautsky, Luxemburg, Bauer, Lenin and Stalin. But if such questions concerned Marxist theorists, it was also a matter of acute practical importance to, say, Croats and Serbs, Macedonians and Bulgarians, whether the nationality of Southern Slavs was defined in one way or another.[68]

The 'principle of nationality' which diplomats debated and which changed the map of Europe in the period from 1830 to 1878 was thus different from the political phenomenon of nationalism which became increasingly central in the era of European democratization and mass politics. In the days of Mazzini it did not matter that, for the great bulk of Italians, the Risorgimento did not exist so that, as Massimo d'Azeglio admitted in the famous phrase: 'We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians.'[69] It did not even matter to those who considered 'the Polish Question' that probably most Polish-speaking peasants (not to mention the third of the population of the old pre-1772 Rzecspopolita who spoke other idioms) did not yet feel themselves to be nationalist Poles; as the eventual liberator of Poland, Colonal Pilsudski recognized in *his* phrase: 'It is the state which makes the nation and

[68] Cf. Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London 1984), pp. 76–86.

[69] Said at the first meeting of the parliament of the newly united Italian kingdom (E. Latham, *Famous Sayings and Their Authors*, Detroit, 1970).

not the nation the state.'[70] But after 1880 it increasingly did matter how ordinary common men and women felt about nationality. It is therefore important to consider the feelings and attitudes among pre-industrial people of this kind, on which the novel appeal of political nationalism could build. The next chapter will do this.

[70] H. Roos, *A History of Modern Poland* (London 1966), p. 48.

CHAPTER 2

Popular proto-nationalism

Why and how could a concept so remote from the real experience of most human beings as 'national patriotism' become such a powerful political force so quickly? It is plainly not enough to appeal to the universal experience of human beings who belong to groups recognizing one another as members of collectivities or communities, and therefore recognizing others as strangers. The problem before us derives from the fact that the modern nation, either as a state or as a body of people aspiring to form such a state, differs in size, scale and nature from the actual communities with which human beings have identified over most of history, and makes quite different demands on them. It is, in Benedict Anderson's useful phrase, an 'imagined community', and no doubt this can be made to fill the emotional void left by the retreat or disintegration, or the unavailability of *real* human communities and networks, but the question still remains why, having lost real communities, people should wish to imagine this particular type of replacement. One reason may be that, in many parts of the world, states and national movements could mobilize certain variants of feelings of collective belonging which already existed and which could operate, as it were, potentially on the macro-political scale which could fit in with modern states and nations. I shall call these bonds 'proto-national'.

They are of two kinds. First, there are supra-local forms of popular identification which go beyond those circumscribing the actual spaces in which people passed most of their lives: as the Virgin Mary links believers in Naples to a wider world, even though for most purposes affecting the people of Naples col-

lectively, St Januarius, whose blood must (and, by an eternally guaranteed miracle does) liquefy every year if ill is not to befall the city, is much more directly relevant. Second, there are the political bonds and vocabularies of select groups more directly linked to states and institutions, and which are capable of eventual generalization, extension and popularization. These have a little more in common with the modern 'nation'. Nevertheless, neither can be legitimately identified with the modern nationalism that passes as their lineal extension, because they had or have no *necessary* relation with the unit of territorial political organization which is a crucial criterion of what we understand as a 'nation' today.

To take only two obvious examples. Until 1945, and vestigially to this day, speakers of German dialects whose elites used the standard written German language of culture, have been settled not only in their main region of central Europe, but as classes of rulers, as townsmen and in patches of peasant settlement all over eastern and southeastern Europe, not to mention small colonies forming a generally religious diaspora in the Americas. They were scattered in a series of waves of conquest, migration and colonization from the eleventh to the eighteenth century as far east as the lower Volga. (We omit the rather different phenomenon of nineteenth-century migration.) All of them certainly regarded themselves as in some sense 'German' as distinct from other groups among whom they lived. Now while there was often friction between local Germans and other ethnic groups, notably where the Germans monopolized certain crucial functions, e.g. as a landed ruling class in the Baltic area, I know of no case before the nineteenth century where a major political problem arose because these Germans found themselves living under non-German rulers. Again, while the Jews, scattered throughout the world for some millennia, never ceased to identify themselves, wherever they were, as members of a special people quite distinct from the various brands of non-believers among whom they lived, at no stage, at least since the return from the Babylonian captivity, does this seem to have implied a serious desire for a Jewish political state, let alone a territorial state, until a Jewish nationalism was invented at the very end of the nineteenth century by analogy with the newfangled western nationalism. It is

entirely illegitimate to identify the Jewish links with the ancestral land of Israel, the merit deriving from pilgrimages there, or the hope of return there when the Messiah came – as he so obviously had *not* come in the view of the Jews – with the desire to gather all Jews into a modern territorial state situated on the ancient Holy Land. One might as well argue that good Muslims, whose highest ambition is to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, in doing so really intend to declare themselves citizens of what has now become Saudi Arabia.

What precisely constitutes popular proto-nationalism? The question is enormously difficult, since it implies discovering the sentiments of the illiterate who formed the overwhelming majority of the world's population before the twentieth century. We are informed about the ideas of that section of the literate who wrote as well as read – or at least of some of them – but it is clearly illegitimate to extrapolate from the elite to the masses, the literate to the illiterate, even though the two worlds are not entirely separable, and the written word influenced the ideas of those who only spoke.[1] What Herder thought about the *Volk* cannot be used as evidence for the thoughts of the Westphalian peasantry. An example may illustrate the potential width of this gap between literate and non-literate. The Germans who formed the class of feudal lords as well as the townspeople and literates in the Baltic region naturally felt that 'national revenge continued to hang as a Damoclean sword over their heads' since, as Christian Kelch pointed out in his Livonian History of 1695, the Estonian and Latvian peasants had plenty of reasons for hating them ('Selbige zu hassen wohl Ursache gehabt') Yet there is no evidence that the Estonian peasants thought in such national terms. In the first place they do not appear to have seen themselves as an ethnic-linguistic group. The word 'Estonian' came into use only in the 1860s. Before then the peasants had simply called themselves 'maarahvas', i.e. 'country people'. In the second place, the word *saks* (Saxon) had the *dominant* meaning 'lord' or 'master' and only the secondary

[1] See Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton 1987), Introduction; also E. J. Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour* (London 1984), pp. 39–42, for the relations of popular and hegemonic culture.

meaning 'German'. It has been plausibly argued (by an eminent Estonian historian) that where (German) literates read references in documents as 'German', the peasants had most probably simply meant 'lord' or 'master':

> From the close of the 18th century the local ministers and clerks could read the works of the enlighteners on the conquest of Estonia (the peasants did not read such books) and were inclined to interpret the words of the peasants in a manner that fitted their own way of thinking.[2]

Let us therefore begin with one of the very few attempts to establish the thinking of those who rarely formulate thoughts on public matters systematically and never write them down, the late Michael Cherniavsky's *Tsar and People*.[3] In that book Cherniavsky discusses, among other matters, the concept of 'Holy Russia' or 'the holy Russian land', a term for which he finds relatively few parallels, the closest being 'Holy Ireland'. He might perhaps have added 'das heil'ge Land Tirol' (The holy land Tyrol) for an interesting comparison and contrast.

If we follow Cherniavsky a land could not become 'holy' until it could put forward a unique claim in the global economy of salvation, i.e. in the case of Russia until the middle of the fifteenth century when the attempted reunion of the churches and the fall of Constantinople which ended the Roman empire, left Russia as the only orthodox land in the world and Moscow as the Third Rome, i.e. as the only source of salvation for mankind. At least this would be the Tsar's view. But such reflections are not strictly germane, for the phrase did not come into wide use until the time of troubles in the early seventeenth century when Tsar and state virtually disappeared. Indeed, even had they not, they would not have contributed to the currency of the phrase since neither Tsar, nor bureaucracy, Church or the ideologists of Muscovite power *ever*

[2] Data and citations from Juhan Kahk, 'Peasants' movements and national movements in the history of Europe' (*Acta Universitatis Stockholmensis. Studia Baltica Stockholmensia*, 2, 1985: 'National movements in the Baltic Countries during the 19th century', pp. 15–16.

[3] Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People. Studies in Russian Myths* (New Haven and London 1961). See also Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read* (Princeton 1985), ch. VI, 'Nationalism and national identity', esp. pp. 213–32.

appear to have used it before or after the time of troubles.[4] In short, Holy Russia was a popular term presumably expressing popular ideas. Its use is illustrated in the mid-seventeenth-century epics of the Don cossacks, such as the 'Poetical tale of the siege of Azov' (by the Turks). Here the besieged cossacks sang:

> We shall never be in Holy Russia again. Our sinful death comes in the deserts. We die for your miracle-working icons, for the Christian faith, for the Tsar's name and for all the Muscovite state.[5]

The holy Russian land is therefore defined by the holy icons, the faith, the Tsar, the state. It is a powerful combination, and not only because icons, i.e. visible symbols such as flags, are still the most widely used methods of envisaging what canot be envisaged. And Holy Russia is unquestionably a popular, an unofficial force, not one created from above. Consider, as Cherniavsky does, with that perceptiveness and delicacy he learned from his teacher Ernst Kantorowicz,[6] the word 'Russia'. The empire of the Tsars, the political unit, was *Rossiya*, a neologism of the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries which became official from Peter the Great on. The holy land of Russia was always the ancient *Rus*. To be a Russian is still to this day to be *Russky*. No word derived from the official Rossiya – and several were tried for size in the eighteenth century – succeeded in getting itself accepted as a description of the Russian *people* or nation, or its members. Being *Russky*, as Cherniavsky reminds us, was interchangeable with being a member of the curious doublet *krestianin–christianin* (peasant–Christian) and with being a 'true believer' or Orthodox. This essential popular and populist sense of Holy Russianness may or may not correspond to the modern nation. In Russia its identification with the head of both Church and state obviously facilitated such identification. In the holy land Tyrol it obviously did not, since the post-tridentine combination of land–icons–faith–emperor–state favoured the Roman Catholic Church and the Habsburg Kaiser (whether as such or as Count of Tyrol) against the newfangled concept of a German or Austrian or any 'nation'. It should be remembered that the

[4] Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People*, pp. 107, 114. [5] *Ibid.* p. 113.

[6] See the pioneering Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton 1957).

Tyrolean peasants in 1809 rose not so much against the French as against the neighbouring Bavarians. However, whether or not 'the people of the holy land' can be identified with the later nation, the concept clearly predates it.

And yet, we observe the omission, from the criteria of Holy Russia, Holy Tyrol and perhaps Holy Ireland, of two elements which today we associate closely, if not crucially, with definitions of the nation: language and ethnicity.

What of language? Is it not the very essence of what distinguishes one people from another, 'us' from 'them', real human beings from the barbarians who cannot talk a genuine language but only make incomprehensible noises? Does not every reader of the Bible learn about the tower of Babel, and how friend was told from foe by the right pronunciation of the word 'shibboleth'? Did not the Greeks define themselves proto-nationally in this way against the remainder of humanity, the 'barbarians'? Does not ignorance of another group's language constitute the most obvious barrier to communication, and therefore the most obvious definer of the lines which separate groups: so that the creation or speaking of a special argot still serves to mark people as members of a subculture which wishes to separate itself from other subcultures or from the community at large?

One can hardly deny that people speaking mutually incomprehensible languages who live side by side will identify themselves as speakers of one, and members of other communities as speakers of other languages or at least as non-speakers of their own (as *barbaroi*, or as *nemci* in the terminology of the Slavs). Yet this is not the issue. The question is, whether such linguistic barriers are believed to separate entities which can be regarded as potential nationalities or nations, and not merely groups which happen to have trouble in understanding each other's words. This question takes us on to the terrain of enquiries into the nature of vernacular languages and their use as criteria of in-group membership. And in investigating both we must, again, beware of confusing the debates of the literate, who happen to be almost our only sources, with those of the illiterate, and of reading twentieth-century usage anachronistically into the past.

Non-literate vernacular languages are always a complex of local variants or dialects intercommunicating with varying degrees of ease or difficulty, depending on geographical closeness or accessibility. Some, notably in mountain areas which facilitate segregation, may be as incomprehensible as if they belonged to a different linguistic family. There are, in the relevant countries, jokes about the difficulties of North Walians understanding the Welsh of those from South Wales, or Gheg Albanians understanding the Tosk dialect. For philologists the fact that Catalan is closer to French than Basque may be crucial, but for a Norman sailor who found himself in Bayonne or Port Bou the local language might, at first hearing, be equally opaque. To this day educated native speakers of German from, say, Kiel, may have the greatest difficulty in understanding even educated Swiss Germans speaking the plainly German dialect which is their usual means of oral communication.

Thus in the era before general primary education there was and could be no spoken 'national' language except such literary or administrative idioms as were written, or devised or adapted for oral use, either as a lingua franca in which speakers of dialects could communicate, or – perhaps more to the point – to address popular audiences across dialectal boundaries, e.g. for preachers or the reciters of songs and poems common to a wider cultural area.[7] The size of this area of common potential communicability might vary considerably. It would almost certainly be larger for elites, whose fields of action and horizons were less localized than for, say, peasants. A genuinely spoken 'national language' evolved on a purely oral basis, other than as a pidgin or lingua franca (which may, of course, eventually turn into an all-purpose language), is difficult to conceive for a region of any substantial geographical size. In other words the actual or literal 'mother tongue', i.e. the

[7] The most useful introduction to this complex of questions is Einar Haugen, 'Dialect, language, nation' (*American Anthropologist*, 68, 1966, pp. 922–35). For the comparatively recent field of sociolinguistics, cf. J. A. Fishman (ed.), *Contributions to the Sociology of Language*, 2 vols. (The Hague–Paris 1972), esp. the editor's 'The sociology of language: an interdisciplinary social science approach to language in society' in vol. 1. For a concrete study of language development/construction by a pioneer, Heinz Kloss, *Die Entwicklung neuer germanischer Kultursprachen von 1800 bis 1950* (Munich 1952).

idiom children learned from illiterate mothers and spoke for everyday use, was certainly not in any sense a 'national language'.

This does not, as I have already hinted, exclude a certain popular *cultural* identification with a language, or a patently related complex of dialects, peculiar to a body of communities and distinguishing them from their neighbours, as in the case of Magyar-speakers. And to the extent that this may be so, the nationalism of a later period may have genuinely popular linguistic proto-national roots. This may well be the case among the Albanians, living under rival cultural influences since classical antiquity, and divided among three or (if we include the locally centred Islamic cult of the Bektashi) even four rival religions: Islam, Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. It was natural for the pioneers of Albanian nationalism to seek an Albanian cultural identity in language, since religion, and indeed almost everything else in Albania, seemed divisive rather than unifying.[8] Yet even in so apparently clear a case we should beware of too much reliance on the literate. In what sense, or even how far, ordinary Albanians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw themselves as such, or recognized an affinity with one another, is far from clear. Edith Durham's guide, a mountain youth from the north, being told that the Albanians in the south had Orthodox churches, said: 'They are not Christians, but Tosks', which does not suggest a strong sense of collective identity, and 'it is not possible to know the precise number of Albanians who came to the United States, for the early immigrants did not often identify themselves as Albanians'.[9] Moreover, even the pioneers of nationhood in that land of feuding clans and lords appealed to more convincing arguments for solidarity before they appealed to language. As Naïm Frashëri (1846–1900) put it: 'All of us are only a single tribe, a single family; we are

[8] 'Les grands noms de cette littérature ... ne célèbrent jamais la réligion dans leurs oeuvres; bien au contraire ils ne manquent aucune occasion pour stigmatiser l'action hostile à l'unité nationale des différents clergés ... Il semble que [la recherche de l'identité culturelle] ... se soit faite essentiellement autour du problème de la langue.' Christian Gut in *Groupe de Travail sur l'Europe Centrale et Orientale. Bulletin d'Information*, no. 2, June 1978, p. 40 (Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris).

[9] Edith Durham, *High Albania* (1909, new edn, London 1985), p. 17; S. Thernstrom *et al.*, *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge and London 1980), p. 24.

of one blood and one language.'[10] Language, while not absent, came last.

National languages are therefore almost always semi-artificial constructs and occasionally, like modern Hebrew, virtually invented. They are the opposite of what nationalist mythology supposes them to be, namely the primordial foundations of national culture and the matrices of the national mind. They are usually attempts to devise a standardized idiom out of a multiplicity of actually spoken idioms, which are thereafter downgraded to dialects, the main problem in their construction being usually, which dialect to choose as the base of the standardized and homogenized language. The subsequent problems of standardizing and homogenizing national grammar and orthography, and adding new elements to the vocabulary, are secondary.[11] The histories of practically every European language insist on this regional base: literary Bulgarian is based on the West Bulgarian idiom, literary Ukrainian on its southeastern dialects, literary Hungarian emerges in the sixteenth century by combining various dialects, literary Latvian is based on the middle one of three variants, Lithuanian on one of two, and so on. Where, as is usually the case in languages achieving literary status in the eighteenth or nineteenth–twentieth century, the names of the language-architects are known, this choice may be arbitrary (though justified by argument).

Sometimes this choice is political or has obvious political implications. Thus the Croats spoke three dialects (*čakavian*, *kajkavian*, *štokavian*, one of which was also the major dialect of the Serbs. Two of them (*kajkavian* and *štokavian*) developed literary versions. The great Croat apostle of Illyrianism, Ljudevit Gaj

[10] Cited in *Groupe de Travail*, p. 52.

[11] For a convenient survey of the field, acutely aware of the 'artificiality' of most culture-languages, Marinella Lörinczi Angioni, 'Appunti per una macrostoria delle lingue scritte de l'Europa moderna' (*Quaderni Sardi di Storia*, 3, July 1981–June 1983, pp. 133–56). It is particularly useful on the lesser languages. For the difference between the traditional Flemish and the modern language, developed since 1841, see the remarks of E. Coornaert in *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire Moderne*, 67e année, 8, 1968, p. 5, in the discussion on R. Devleeshouwer, 'Données historiques des problèmes linguistiques belges'. See also Jonathan Steinberg, 'The historian and the *Questione della lingua*' in P. Burke and Roy Porter (eds.), *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge 1987), pp. 198–209).

(1809–72), though a native speaker and writer of *kajkavian* Croat switched his own writings from this dialect to *štokavian* in 1838, in order to underline the basic unity of southern Slavs, thus ensuring (a) that Serbo-Croat developed more or less as one literary language (though written in Roman characters by the Catholic Croats, in Cyrillic ones by the Orthodox Serbs), (b) depriving Croat nationalism of the convenient linguistic justification, and (c) providing both Serbs, and later Croats, with an excuse for expansionism.[12] On the other hand sometimes they guess wrong. Bernolák picked one dialect as the basis of what he intended to be literary Slovak around 1790, which failed to establish itself, but a few decades later Ludovit Štur chose what proved to be a more viable base. In Norway the nationalist Wergeland (1808–45) demanded a more purely Norwegian Norwegian, as distinct from the excessively Danicized written language, and such a language was promptly constructed (Landsmål, known today as Nynorsk). In spite of official support after Norway became independent, it has never established itself as more than a minority language of the country, which, since 1947 is *de facto* bilingual in writing, Nynorsk being confined to 20% of Norwegians, especially those living in western and central Norway.[13] Of course in several of the older literary languages history made the required choice, as when dialects associated with the area of royal administration became the foundation of the literary idiom in France and England, or when the combination of commercial-maritime usage, cultural prestige and Macedonian support helped Attic to become the foundation of the Hellenistic *koiné* or common Greek idiom.

We may leave aside, for the time being, the lesser, but also urgent problem, of how to modernize even such old 'national' literary idioms as exist in order to suit them for a contemporary life not envisaged by the French Academy or Dr Johnson. The problem is

12 The matter is well put by Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London 1984) (whence these data come): 'The unique Croatian dialectal situation, that is the use of three dialects ... could not be reconciled with the romantic belief that language was the most profound expression of national spirit. Obviously one nation could not have three spirits, nor could one dialect be shared by two nationalities' (p. 81).

13 Einar Haugen, *The Scandinavian languages: An Introduction* (London 1976).

universal, though complicated in many cases – notably among the Dutch, the Germans, the Czechs, the Icelanders and several others – by what one might call philological nationalism, i.e. the insistence on the linguistic purity of the national vocabulary, which obliged German scientists to translate 'oxygen' into 'Sauerstoff', and is today inspiring a desperate French rearguard action against the ravages of *franglais*. However, inevitably the problem is more acute in languages which have not been the major carriers of culture, but wish to become suitable vehicles for, say, higher education and modern techno-economic communication. Let us not underestimate the seriousness of such problems. Thus Welsh claims, possibly with some justification, to be the most ancient living literary language, dating back to the sixth century or thereabouts. Yet in 1847 it was observed that it

> would be impossible to express in Welsh many an ordinary proposition in politics and science in such a way as completely to convey the sense to even an intelligent Welsh reader unacquainted with English.[14]

It is thus clear that, except for the rulers and the literate, language could hardly be a criterion of nationhood, and even for these it was first necessary to choose a national vernacular (in a standardized literary form) over the more prestigious languages, holy or classical or both, which were, for small elites, perfectly practicable means of administrative or intellectual communication, public debate, or even – one thinks of classical Persian in the Mughal Empire, classical Chinese in Heian Japan – of literary composition. That choice, admittedly, was made everywhere sooner or later, except perhaps in China where the lingua franca of the classically educated became the only means of communication between otherwise mutually incomprehensible dialects in the vast empire, and is in the process of becoming something like a spoken language.

Why, indeed, should language be such a criterion of group membership, except perhaps where language differentiation coincided with some other reason to mark oneself off from some other community? Marriage itself, as an institution, does not assume

[14] Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales (*Parliamentary Papers* XXVII of 1847, part III, p. 853n.).

community of language, otherwise there could hardly be institutionalized exogamy. One sees no reason to dissent from the learned historian of opinions on the multiplicity of languages and peoples, who holds that 'only late generalization establishes human beings of the same language as friends, foreign languages as foes'.[15] Where there are no other languages within earshot, one's own idiom is not so much a group criterion as something that all people have, like legs. Where several languages coexist, multilingualism may be so normal as to make an exclusive identification with any one idiom quite arbitrary. (This makes censuses requiring such an exclusive choice unreliable sources of linguistic information.)[16] In such areas linguistic statistics may swing wildly from one census to another, since identification with an idiom depends not on knowledge but on some other changing factor, as in some areas of Slovenia and Moravia under the Habsburgs; or else people may speak both their own language and an officially unrecognized lingua franca, as in parts of Istria.[17] Moreover, these languages are not interchangeable. People in Mauritius do not arbitrarily choose between speaking creole and whatever their own domestic language is, because they use each for different purposes as do the German Swiss who write High German and speak Schwyzerdütsch, or the Slovene father in Josef Roth's moving novel *Radetzkymarsch*, who addresses his promoted officer son, not in their native language, as the young man expects, but in 'the ordinary harsh German of army Slavs'[18] out of respect for the status of a Habsburg officer. In fact, the mystical identification of nationality with a sort of platonic idea of the language, existing behind and above all its variant and imperfect versions, is much more characteristic of the ideological construction of nationalist intellectuals, of whom Herder is the prophet, than of the actual grassroots users of the idiom. It is a literary and not an existential concept.

[15] Arno Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen der Völker*, 4 vols. in 6 (Stuttgart 1957–63) vol. IV, p. 1913.

[16] Paul M. G. Lévy, 'La Statistique des langues en Belgique' (*Revue de l'Institut de Sociologie* (Bruxelles), 18, 1938, pp. 507–70).

[17] Emil Brix, *Die Umgangsprachen in Altösterreich zwischen Agitation und Assimilation. Die Sprachstatistik in den zisleithanischen Volkszählungen 1880–1910* (Vienna–Cologne–Graz 1982), e.g. pp. 182, 214, 332.

[18] Josef Roth, *The Radetzkymarch* (Harmondsworth 1974), p. 5.

This is not to deny that languages, or even linguistic families, are not part of popular reality. For most peoples of Germanic languages most foreigners to their west and south – mainly Romance speakers, but also Celts – are *Welsh*, whereas most people of Finnish and later Slavonic speech to their east and southeast were *Wends*; and conversely, to most Slavs all German speakers are *nemci*. However, it was always evident to all that language and people (however each was defined) did not coincide. In the Sudan the settled Fur live in symbiosis with the nomadic Baggara, but a neighbouring camp of Fur nomads speaking Fur is treated as though they were Baggara, since the crucial distinction between the two peoples is not one of language but function. That these nomads speak Fur 'simply makes the standard transactions of buying milk, allocating camp sites, or obtaining manure, which one would have with other Baggara, flow a bit more smoothly.'[19]

In more 'theoretical' terms, the famous seventy-two languages into which the human race was split after the tower of Babel (at least by medieval commentators on the Book of Genesis) each covered several *nationes* or tribes, according to Anselm of Laon, pupil of the great Anselm of Canterbury. William of Alton, an English Dominican, speculating further along these lines in the mid-thirteenth century, distinguished among men between language groups (according to the idiom spoken), between *generationes* (according to origin), between the inhabitants of particular territories, and between *gentes* who were defined by differences in customs and conversations. These classifications did not necessarily coincide, and were not to be confused with a *populus* or people, which was defined by the will to obey a common law, and which was therefore a historico-political rather than a 'natural' community.[20] In this analysis William of Alton showed an admirable, but, until the late nineteenth century, not uncommon perspicacity and realism.

For language was merely one, and not necessarily the primary, way of distinguishing between cultural communities. Herodotus held that the Greeks formed one people, in spite of their geo-

[19] Frederik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston 1969), p. 30.

[20] Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel*, pp. 752–3.

graphical and political fragmentation, because they were of common descent, had a common language, common gods and sacred places, sacrificial festivals and customs, mores or ways of life.[21] Surely language would be of crucial importance to literates like Herodotus. Would it have been an equally important criterion of Greekness to run-of-the-mill Boeotians or Thessalians? We do not know. What we do know is that nationalist struggles have sometimes been complicated in modern times by the refusal of fractions of linguistic groups to accept political unity with their co-speakers. Such cases (the so-called *Wasserpolacken* in Silesia during its German period, the so-called *Windische* in the border zone between what became Austria and the Slovene part of Yugoslavia) led to embittered accusations by Poles and Slovenes that such categories had been invented by great-German chauvinists to justify their territorial expansionism, and no doubt these accusations had some truth. Nevertheless the existence of groups of linguistic Poles and Slovenes who, for whatever reason, preferred to consider themselves politically German or Austrian, cannot be entirely denied.

Language in the Herderian sense of the language spoken by the *Volk* was therefore plainly not a central element in the formation of proto-nationalism directly, though it was not necessarily irrelevant to it. However, indirectly it was to become central to the modern definition of nationality, and therefore also to the popular perception of it. For where an elite literary or administrative language exists, however small the number of its actual users, it can become an important element of proto-national cohesion for three reasons which are well set out by B. Anderson.[22]

First, it creates a community of this intercommunicating elite which, if it coincides with or can be made to coincide with a particular territorial state area and vernacular zone, can be a sort of model or pilot project for the as yet non-existent larger intercom-

[21] Herodotus, *Histories*, VIII, 144. Borst, who discusses the question, points out that, while the Greeks certainly thought 'language' was tied to 'people' and both could be numbered, Euripides thought language was irrelevant, and Zeno the Stoic was bilingual in Phoenician and Greek (*ibid.* 137, 160).

[22] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1983), pp. 46–9; more generally on language, chapter 5.

municating community of 'the nation'. To this extent the spoken idioms are not irrelevant to the future nationality. Dead 'classical' or ritual languages, however prestigious, are ill-suited to become national languages, as was discovered in Greece, where there was actual linguistic continuity between ancient and modern spoken Greek. Vuk Karadzić (1787–1864), the great reformer, and indeed virtual founder, of modern literary Serbo-Croat, was undoubtedly right in resisting the early attempts to create such a literary language out of Church Slavonic by those who anticipated the later creation of modern Hebrew out of an adapted ancient Hebrew, and in building it on the dialects spoken by the Serbian people.[23] Both the impulse which led to the creation of modern spoken Hebrew, and the circumstances which led to its successful establishment, are too unusual to set a general example.

However, given that the dialect which forms the basis of a national language is actually spoken, it does not matter that those who speak it are a minority, so long as it is a minority of sufficient political weight. In this sense French was essential to the concept of France, even though in 1789 50% of Frenchmen did not speak it at all, only 12–13% spoke it 'correctly' – and indeed outside a central region it was not usually habitually spoken even in the area of the *langue d'oui*, except in towns, and then not always in their suburbs. In northern and southern France virtually nobody talked French.[24] If French had at least a state whose 'national language' it could be, the only basis for Italian unification was the Italian language, which united the educated elite of the peninsula as readers and writers, even though it has calculated that at the moment of unification (1860) only 2½% of the population used the language for everyday

[23] For a similar debate in connection with the Slovak language, see Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (London 1977), pp. 170–1.

[24] The basic source in these matters is Ferdinand Brunot (ed.) *Histoire de la langue française* (13 vols., Paris 1927–43), esp. vol. IX; and M. de Certeau, D. Julia, J. Revel, *Une politique de la langue: La Révolution Française et les patois: l'enquête de l'Abbé Grégoire* (Paris 1975). For the problem of extending a minority official language into a mass national language during and after the French Revolution, see the excellent Renée Balibar, *L'Institution du français: essai sur le co-linguisme des Carolingiens à la République* (Paris 1985); see also R. Balibar and D. Laporte, *Le Français national: politique et pratique de la langue nationale sous la Révolution* (Paris 1974).

purposes.[25] For this tiny group was, in a real sense *a* and therefore potentially *the* Italian people. Nobody else was. Just so the Germany of the eighteenth century was a purely cultural concept, and yet, because it was the only one in which 'Germany' had a being, as distinct from the multiplicity of principalities and states, large and small, administered and divided by religion and political horizons, which were administered by means of the German language. It consisted of at most 3–500,000 readers[26] of works in the literary vernacular, and the almost certainly much smaller number who actually spoke the 'Hochsprache' or culture-language for everyday purposes,[27] notably the actors who performed the (new) works which became the vernacular classics. For in the absence of a state standard of what was correct (the 'King's English') in Germany the standard of correctness was established in the theatres.

The second reason is that a common language, just because it is not naturally evolved but constructed, and especially when forced into print, acquired a new fixity which made it appear more permanent and hence (by an optical illusion) more 'eternal' than it really was. Hence the importance not only of the invention of printing, especially where a vernacular version of a holy book provided the foundation of the literary language, as has often been the case, but also of the great correctors and standardizers who appear in the literary history of every culture-language, at all events after the emergence of the printed book. Essentially this era occurs

25 Tullio de Mauro, *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (Bari 1963), p. 41.

26 Until the 'early nineteenth century' *all* works by Goethe and Schiller, jointly and severally, appear to have sold less than 100,000 copies, i.e. over 30–40 years. H. U. Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte 1700–1815* (Munich 1987), p. 305.

27 Except for Switzerland it is probably a slight exaggeration to maintain that 'anche oggi il tedesco (*Hochdeutsch*), ancor più che l'italiano, è una vera e propria lingua artificiale di cultura, sovradialettale, "sotto" o insieme con la quale la maggior parte degli utenti si servono anche di una *Umgangsprache* locale' (Lörinczi Angioni, 'Appunti', p. 139n.), but it was certainly true in the early nineteenth century. Thus Manzoni, whose *I Promessi sposi* created Italian as a national language of prose fiction, did not speak it in everyday life, communicating with his French wife in her language (which he may have spoken better than Italian) and with others in his native Milanese. Indeed, the first edition of his great novel still showed many traces of Milanese, a defect he systematically attempted to remove in the second edition. I am indebted to Professor Conor Fahy for this information.

between the late eighteenth and the early twentieth century for all except a handful of European languages.

Thirdly, the official or culture-language of rulers and elite usually came to be the actual language of modern states *via* public education and other administrative mechanisms.

However, all these are later developments. They hardly affect the language of the common people in the pre-nationalist and certainly in the pre-literate era. No doubt Mandarin tied together a vast Chinese empire many of whose peoples could not understand each other's language, but it did not do so directly through language, but through the administration of a centralized empire which happened to operate through a common set of ideographs and a means of elite communication. For most Chinese it would not have mattered if the mandarins had communicated in Latin, just as it did not matter for most inhabitants of India that the East India Company in the 1830s replaced the Persian language, which had been the administrative idiom of the Mughal empire, with English. Both were equally foreign to them, and, since they did not write or even read, irrelevant. To the grief of subsequent nationalist historians, the Flemish inhabitants of what later became Belgium were not mobilized against the French by the ruthless Gallicization of public and official life in the revolutionary and Napoleonic years, nor did Waterloo lead to any 'pronounced movement in Flanders in favour of the Flemish language or of Flemish culture'.[28] Why should they? For those who could understand no French practical administrative concessions had to be made even by a regime of linguistic zealots. It is much less surprising that the influx of francophone foreigners into the rural communes of Flanders was resented more for their refusal to attend mass on Sundays than on linguistic grounds.[29] In short, special cases aside, there is no reason to suppose that language was more than one among several criteria by which people indicated belonging to a human collectivity. And it

[28] Shepard B. Clough, *A History of the Flemish Movement in Belgium: A Study in Nationalism* (New York 1930, repr. 1968), p. 25. For the slowness of the growth of linguistic consciousness, see also Val R. Lorwin, 'Belgium: religion, class and language in national politics' in Robert A. Dahl, *Political Opposition in Western Democracies* (New Haven 1966), p. 158ff.

[29] S. B. Clough, *A History of the Flemish Movement in Belgium*, pp. 21–2.

is absolutely certain that language had as yet no political potential. As a French commentator on the tower of Babel observed in 1536:

> There are now more than LXXII languages, because there are now more different nations on earth than there were in those days.[30]

Languages multiply with states; not the other way round.

What of ethnicity? In ordinary usage this is almost always connected in some unspecified way with common origin and descent, from which the common characteristics of the members of an ethnic group are allegedly derived. 'Kinship' and 'blood' have obvious advantages in bonding together members of a group and excluding outsiders, and are therefore central to ethnic nationalism. 'Culture (Kultur) can't be acquired by education. Culture is in the blood. The best proof of this today is the Jews, who cannot do more than appropriate our civilization (Zivilisation) but never our culture.' Thus the National Socialist Kreisleiter of Innsbruck in 1938, Hans Hanak – ironically, the name demonstrates Slavonic origin – congratulating the Nazi women of Innsbruck because the Jewish attempt to destroy their 'high and respected status' by preaching the equality of men and women, had only had a fleeting moment of success.[31] Yet the genetic approach to ethnicity is plainly irrelevant, since the crucial base of an ethnic group as a form of social organization is cultural rather than biological.[32]

Moreover, the populations of large territorial nation-states are almost invariably too heterogeneous to claim a common ethnicity, even if we leave aside modern immigration, and in any case the demographic history of large parts of Europe has been such that we *know* how multifarious the origin of ethnic groups can be, especially when areas have been depopulated and resettled in the course of time, as in vast areas of central, eastern and south-eastern Europe, or even in parts of France.[33] The precise mixture of pre-Roman Illyrians, Romans, Greeks, immigrant Slavs of various kinds and various waves of central Asian invaders from the Avars

30 Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel.*

31 Cited in Leopold Spira, 'Bemerkungen zu Jörg Haider' (*Wiener Tagebuch*, October 1988, p. 6).

32 I follow the convincing argument of Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries.*

33 Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848–1945* (Oxford 1977), vol. 1, pp. 46–7.

to the Ottoman Turks, which make up the ethnicity of any people in southeastern Europe, is an eternal matter of debate (especially in Romania). Thus the Montenegrins, originally considered Serbs but now a 'nationality' and federated republic of their own, appear to be a combination of Serb peasants, relics of the Old Serb kingdom and of Vlach herdsmen moving into the area depopulated by the Turkish conquest.[34] Of course it is not to be denied that, say, thirteenth-century Magyars would see themselves as an ethnic community, since they were, or could claim to be, descended from waves of central Asian nomadic invaders, spoke variants of a language utterly unlike any which surrounded them, lived, by and large, in a specific ecological environment, in their own kingdom and doubtless shared various ancestral practices. But such cases are not particularly common.

Nevertheless, ethnicity in the Herodotean sense was, is and can be something that binds together populations living on large territories or even in dispersion, and lacking a common polity, into something which can be called proto-nations. This may well be the case of the Kurds, the Somalis, the Jews, the Basques and others. However, such ethnicity has no historic relation to what is the crux of the modern nation, namely the formation of a nation-state, or for that matter any state, as the case of the ancient Greeks demonstrates. One might even argue that the peoples with the most powerful and lasting sense of what may be called 'tribal' ethnicity, not merely resisted the imposition of the modern state, national or otherwise, but very commonly *any* state: as witness the Pushtu speakers in and around Afghanistan, the pre-1745 Scots highlanders, the Atlas Berbers, and others who will come readily to mind.

Conversely, insofar as 'the people' was identified with a particular polity, even when seen from below it cut across ethnic (and linguistic) divides within it, obvious though these were. The men of the holy land Tyrol who rose against the French in 1809 under

[34] Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 44. However, since these facts are taken from an ample and erudite *Istorija Crne Gore*, published in 1970 in the capital of a republic based on the assumption that Montenegrins are not the same as Serbs, the reader should, as always in Balkan historiography, keep an ear open for the sound of grinding axes.

Andreas Hofer, included both the Germans and the Italians as well as, no doubt, the Ladinsch speakers.[35] Swiss nationalism is, as we know, pluri-ethnic. For that matter, if we were to suppose that the Greek mountaineers who rose against the Turks in Byron's day were nationalists, which is admittedly improbable, we cannot fail to note that some of their most formidable fighters were not Hellenes but Albanians (the Suliotes). Moreover, very few modern national movements are actually based on a strong ethnic consciousness, though they often invent one once they have got going, in the form of racism. To sum up, we need not therefore be surprised that the Don cossacks left out ethnicity or common ancestry from their definition of what made them sons of the holy Russian land. As a matter of fact they were wise to do so, since – like so many bodies of free peasant fighters – their origins were extremely mixed. Many of them were Ukrainians, Tatars, Poles, Lithuanians as well as Great Russians. What united them was not blood but belief.

Is ethnicity or 'race' therefore irrelevant to modern nationalism? Plainly this is not the case, since visible differences in physique are too obvious to be overlooked and have too often been used to mark or reinforce distinctions between 'us' and 'them', including national ones. Only three things need be said about such differences. First, they have, historically, functioned as horizontal dividers as well as vertical ones, and, before the era of modern nationalism, probably more commonly served to separate social strata than entire communities. The commonest use of colour discrimination in history appears, unfortunately, to be the one which assigned a higher social position to lighter colours within the same society (as e.g. in India), though both mass migration and social mobility have tended to complicate matters, or even to reverse the relationship, so that the 'right' kind of racial classification goes with the 'right' kind of social position, irrespective of physical appearance; as in Andean countries where Indians who

[35] John W. Cole and Eric R. Wolf, *The Hidden Frontier: Ecology and Ethnicity in an Alpine Valley* (New York and London 1974), pp. 112–13.

join the lower middle class are automatically reclassified as 'mestizos' or *cholos*, irrespective of appearance.[36]

Second, 'visible' ethnicity tends to be negative, inasmuch as it is much more usually applied to define 'the other' than one's own group. Hence the proverbial role of racial stereotypes (the 'Jewish nose'), the relative colour-blindness of colonizers to colour differences among those classified as globally 'black', and the claim that 'they all look alike to me' which is probably based on selective social vision of what 'the other' is believed to have in common, such as slant eyes and yellow skin. The ethnic-racial homogeneity of one's own 'nationality' is taken for granted, where it is asserted – which is by no means in all cases – even when the most superficial inspection might throw doubt on it. For to 'us' it seems obvious that the members of our 'nationality' cover a wide range of sizes, shapes and appearances, even when all of them share certain physical characteristics, such as a certain type of black hair. It is only to 'them' that we all look alike.

Third, such negative ethnicity is virtually always irrelevant to proto-nationalism, unless it can be or has been fused with something like a state tradition, as perhaps in China, Korea and Japan, which are indeed among the extremely rare examples of historic states composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogeneous.[37] In such cases it is quite possible that ethnicity and political loyalty are linked. I am informed that the special role of the Ming dynasty in Chinese rebellions since its overthrow in 1644 – its restoration was, and perhaps still is, on the programme of important secret societies – is due to the fact that, unlike its predecessor, the Mongol, and its successor, the Manchu dynasty, it was purely Chinese or Han dynasty. For this reason the most

[36] Conversely, those who do not know the person's social position – perhaps because he or she has migrated to the big city – judge it purely by colour and therefore declass him or her. Resentment at this appears to have been a common cause for the political radicalization of students in Lima in the 1960s and 1970s, when masses of children of upwardly mobile provincial *cholo* families flooded into the rapidly expanding universities. I am grateful to Nicolas Lynch whose unpublished study of the Maoist student leaders at San Marcos University makes the point.

[37] Thus of the (non-Arab) Asian states today Japan and the two Koreas are 99% homogeneous, and 94% of the People's Republic of China are Han. These countries exist, more or less, within their historic frontiers.

obvious ethnic differences have played a rather small part in the genesis of modern nationalism. Indians in Latin America since the Spanish conquest have had a deep sense of ethnic difference from whites and mestizos, especially as this was reinforced and institutionalized by the Spanish colonial system of dividing the population into racial castes.[38] However, I know of no case where this has as yet led to a nationalist movement. It has rarely even inspired pan-Indian sentiment among Indians, as distinct from *indigenista* intellectuals.[39] Again, what the inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa have in common as against their light-skinned conquerors, is a relatively dark colour. *Négritude* is a feeling which really exists, not only among black intellectuals and elites, but whenever an assembly of the more dark-skinned confront those of lighter skin. It may be a political factor, but mere colour-consciousness has not produced a single African state, not even Ghana and Senegal whose founders were inspired by pan-African ideas. Nor has it resisted the pull of the actual African states which were formed out of former European colonies whose only internal cohesion came from a few decades of colonial administration.

We are therefore left with the criteria of Holy Russia as the seventeenth-century Cossacks saw them: that is to say religion and kingship or empire.

The links between religion and national consciousness can be very close, as the examples of Poland and Ireland demonstrate. In fact, the relation seems to grow closer where nationalism becomes a mass force than in its phase as a minority ideology and activists'

38 The standard work is Magnus Mörner, *El mestizaje en la historia de Ibero-América* (Mexico City 1961); see also Alejandro Lipschutz, *El problema racial en la conquista de América y el mestizaje* (Santiago de Chile 1963), esp. chapter v. 'However, while the Leyes de Indias frequently refer to *castes*, the concepts and terminology are shifting and contradictory' (Sergio Bagú, *Estructura social de la Colonia* (Buenos Aires 1952), p. 122.

39 The major exception, which confirms the analysis of this chapter – see below p. 162 – is the memory of the Inca empire in Peru, which has inspired both myths and (localized) movements envisaging its restoration. See the anthology *Ideología mesiánica del mundo andino*, ed. Juan M. Ossio A. (Lima 1973) and Alberto Flores Galindo, *Buscando un Inca: identidad y Utopia en los Andes* (Havana 1986). However, it seems clear from Flores' excellent treatment of the Indian movements and their supporters (a) that Indian movements against the *mistis* were essentially social, (b) that they had no 'national' implications, if only because until after World War II Andean Indians did not know themselves to be living in Peru (p. 321), and (c) that the *indigenista* intellectuals of the period knew virtually nothing about the Indians (e.g. p. 292).

movement. Zionist militants in the heroic days of the Palestine *Yishuv* were more likely to eat ham sandwiches demonstratively than to wear ritual caps, as Israeli zealots are apt to do today. The nationalism of Arab countries is today so identified with Islam that friends and enemies find it hard to fit into it the various Arab Christian minorities, Copts, Maronites and Greek Catholics, who were its main pioneers in Egypt and Turkish Syria.[40] Indeed, this growing identification of nationalism with religion is characteristic of the Irish movement also. Nor is this surprising. Religion is an ancient and well-tried method of establishing communion through common practice and a sort of brotherhood between people who otherwise have nothing much in common.[41] Some versions of it, such as Judaism, are specifically designed as membership badges for particular human communities.

Yet religion is a paradoxical cement for proto-nationalism, and indeed for modern nationalism, which has usually (at least in its more crusading phases) treated it with considerable reserve as a force which could challenge the 'nation's' monopoly claim to its members' loyalty. In any case genuinely tribal religions normally operate on too small a scale for modern nationalities, and resist much broadening out. On the other hand the world religions which were invented at various times between the sixth century BC and the seventh century AD, are universal by definition, and therefore designed to fudge ethnic, linguistic, political and other differences. Spaniards and Indians in the empire, Paraguayans, Brazilians and Argentines since independence, were equally faithful children of Rome, and could not distinguish themselves as communities by their religion. Fortunately universal truths are often in competition, and peoples on the borders of one can sometimes choose another as an ethnic badge, as Russians, Ukrainians and Poles could differentiate themselves as Orthodox, Uniate and Roman Catholic believers (Christianity having proved itself the most convenient

[40] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London 1938) is, by and large, supported by Maxime Rodinson, 'Développement et structure de l'arabisme' in his *Marxisme et monde musulman* (Paris 1972), pp. 587–602.

[41] Fred R. Van der Mehden, *Religion and Nationalism in Southeast Asia: Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines* (Madison 1963) is useful in considering countries of very different religions.

breeder of rival universal truths). Perhaps the fact that the great Confucian empire of China is surrounded on the land side by a vast semi-circle of small peoples who are loyal to other religions (mainly Buddhism but also Islam) is part of the same phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the prevalence of transnational religions, at all events in the regions of the world in which modern nationalism developed, imposed limits on religio-ethnic identification. It is far from universal, and even where it is found, it usually distinguishes the people in question not from all its neighbours, but only from some, as, e.g. Lithuanians are separated from Lutheran Germans and Latvians and from Orthodox Russians and Byelorussians by their Roman Catholicism, but not from Poles who are equally fervent Catholics. In Europe only the nationalist Irish, who have no neighbours other than Protestants, are exclusively defined by their religion.[42]

But what exactly does religio-ethnic identification mean, where it occurs? Clearly in some cases an ethnic religion is chosen because a people feels different from neighbouring peoples or states in the first place. Iran, it would appear, has gone its own divine way both as a Zoroastrian country and, since its conversion to Islam, or at any rate since the Safavids, as a Shiite one. The Irish only came to be identified with Catholicism when they failed, or perhaps refused, to follow the English into the Reformation, and massive colonization of part of their country by Protestant settlers who took away their best land was not likely to convert them.[43] The Churches of England and Scotland are politically defined, even though the latter represents orthodox Calvinism. Perhaps the people of Wales, not till then much given to going a separate religious way, converted *en masse* to Protestant dissent in the first half of the nineteenth century as part of that acquisition of a national consciousness which has recently been the subject of some perceptive research.[44] On the

[42] However, in the nineteenth century the distinction between fervent believers and the lukewarm or godless introduced additional possibilities for wearing national-religious badges. This inclined the Catholic Church to sympathize with such movements as the Bretons, Basques and Flemings.

[43] In a county like Antrim it is said that the feel of a handful of soil will tell a man whether the land from which it came is inhabited by Catholic or Protestant.

[44] Cf. Gwyn Alfred Williams, *The Welsh in their History* (London and Canberra 1982); 'When was Wales?' (London 1985).

other hand it is equally clear that conversion to different religions can help to create two different nationalities, for it is certainly Roman Catholicism (and its by-product, the Latin script) and Orthodoxy (with its by-product, the Cyrillic script) which has most obviously divided Croats from Serbs, with whom they share a single language of culture. But, then again, there are peoples which clearly possessed some proto-national consciousness, such as the Albanians, while divided by more religious differences than are usually found in a territory the size of Wales (various forms of Islam, Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism). And finally, it is far from clear whether separate religious identity, however powerful, is, taken by itself, similar to nationalism. The modern tendency is to assimilate the two, since we are no longer familiar with the model of the multi-corporate state, in which various religious communities coexist under a supreme authority as in some senses autonomous and self-administering entities; as under the Ottoman empire.[45] It is by no means evident that Pakistan was the product of a national movement among the Muslim of the then Indian Empire, though it may well be regarded as a reaction against an all-Indian national movement which failed to give adequate recognition to the special feelings or requirements of Muslims, and though, in an era of the modern nation-state, territorial partition seemed to be the only available formula, it is far from clear that a separate territorial state is what even the Muslim League had in mind until very late, or would have insisted on but for the intransigence of Jinnah (who was indeed something like a Muslim nationalist, for he was certainly not a religious believer). And it is quite certain that the bulk of ordinary Muslims thought in communal and not in national terms, and would not have understood the concept of national self-determination as something which could apply to belief in Allah and His Prophet.

No doubt Pakistanis now see themselves as members of a separate (Islamic) nation, as do Bangladeshis, having lived under separate states for varying periods of time. No doubt Bosnian and Chinese Muslims will eventually consider themselves a nationality,

[45] On the *millet* system in the Ottoman empire, see H. A. R. Gibb and H. A. Bowen, *Islamic Society in the West* (Oxford 1957), vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 219–26.

since their governments treat them as one. However, like so many national phenomena, this will be or has been an *ex post facto* development. Indeed, powerful as the religious identification of Muslims is with Islam, within the vast area where Islam borders on other religions there seem to be few if any proto-national or national movements unambiguously characterized by the Islamic badge, except the Iranian. That they may be developing today against Israel or perhaps in the Soviet central Asian republics, is another matter. In short, the relations between religion and proto-national or national identification remain complex and extremely opaque. They certainly resist simple generalization.

However, as Gellner points out,[46] a people's junction with larger cultures, especially literate cultures, which is often mediated by a conversion to a variant of a world religion, does allow ethnic groups to acquire assets which may later help to turn them into nations and to structure them as such. African groups so linked, he has persuasively argued, are in a better position than others to develop nationalism – as in the Horn of Africa where both the Christian Amhara and the Muslim Somali have found it easier to become 'state peoples' because they are 'people of the book', though, in Gellner's phrase, in different and rival editions. This seems plausible enough, though one would like to know how much bearing conversion to variants of Christianity has on the only other sub-Saharan political phenomena that look like modern mass nationalism, namely the Biafra secession of 1967 and the South African National Congress.

If religion is not a necessary mark of proto-nationality (though one can see why it was for seventeenth-century Russians, pressed both by Catholic Poland and the Muslim Turks and Tatars), the holy icons, on the other hand, are a crucial component of it, as they are of modern nationalism. They represent the symbols and rituals or common collective practices which alone give a palpable reality to otherwise imaginary community. They may be shared images (as the icons were) or practices like the Muslim's five daily prayers, or even ritual words like the Muslims' Allah Akbar or the Jews Shema Yisroel. They may be named images identified with territories

[46] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford 1983).

sufficiently large to constitute a nation such as the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico or the Virgin of Montserrat in Catalonia. They may be periodic festivals or contests which bring scattered groups together such as the Greek Olympics and more recent nationalist inventions along the same lines such as the Catalan Jocs Florals, the Welsh Eisteddfodau and others. The significance of the holy icons is demonstrated by the universal use of simple pieces of coloured fabric – namely flags – as the symbol of modern nations, and their association with highly charged ritual occasions or acts of worship.

However, as in the case of religion, 'holy icons' whatever their form and nature, may be either too wide or too narrow to serve as symbols of a proto-nation. The Virgin Mary alone is difficult to confine to any limited sector of the Catholic world, and for every localized Virgin who becomes a proto-national symbol, there are scores or hundreds who remain patronesses of restricted communities or are otherwise irrelevant for our purpose. The most satisfactory icons from a proto-national point of view are obviously those specifically associated with a state, i.e. in the pre-national phase, with a divine or divinely imbued king or emperor whose realm happens to coincide with a future nation. Rulers who are ex officio heads of their churches (as in Russia) naturally lend themselves to this association, but the magical kingships of England and France demonstrate its potential even where Church and state are dissociated.[47] Since there are comparatively few theocracies which have nation-making possibilities, it is difficult to judge how far purely divine authority is enough. The question must be left to experts in the history of Mongols and Tibetans or, nearer to the west, of the medieval Armenians. It was certainly not enough in nineteenth-century Europe, as the Neo-Guelphs discovered in Italy when they tried to build an Italian nationalism round the Papacy. They failed, even though the Papacy was *de facto* an Italian institution and indeed before 1860 the *only* properly all-Italian institution. However, the Holy Church could hardly be expected to turn itself into a localized national, let alone nationalist, establishment, least

[47] The classical treatment of this theme is still Marc Bloch's *Les Rois thaumaturges* (Paris 1924).

of all under Pius IX. What Italy unified under the papal banner would have been like in the nineteenth century is not even worth speculating about.

This brings us to the last and almost certainly the most decisive criterion of proto-nationalism, the consciousness of belonging or having belonged to a lasting political entity.[48] The strongest proto-national cement known is undoubtedly to be what nineteenth-century jargon called a 'historical nation', especially if the state which formed the framework of the later 'nation' was associated with a special *Staatsvolk* or state-people such as the Great Russians, the English or the Castilians. However, here a clear distinction must be made between the direct and indirect effects of national historicity.

For in most cases the 'political nation' which originally formulates the vocabulary of what later becomes the nation-people is not understood to include more than a small fraction of the inhabitants of a state, namely the privileged elite, or the nobility and gentry. When the French nobles described the Crusades as *gesta Dei per francos* they had no intention of associating the triumph of the cross with the bulk of the inhabitants of France, or even of that small part of the hexagon which bore that name in the late eleventh century, if only because most of those who saw themselves as the descendants of the Franks would consider the populace over which they ruled as the descendants of people conquered by the Franks. (This view was turned upside down for democratic purposes by the Republic which insisted through its schools textbooks that 'our ancestors' were the Gauls and not the Franks, and was reaffirmed for reactionary and eugenic purposes by post-revolutionary reactionaries like Count Gobineau.) This 'nationalism of the nobility' may certainly be regarded as proto-national, inso far as 'the three elements *natio*, political *fidelitas* and *communitas*, that is to say the categories of 'nationality', political 'loyalty' and 'political commonwelath' were ... already united in the socio-political

[48] However, it must not be assumed that this consciousness affected all groups of the population in the same way, or covered anything like the territory of the modern 'nation', or implied modern nationality. Popular Greek consciousness, presumably based on the Byzantine heritage, was of being parts of the Roman empire (*romaiosyne*).

consciousness and the emotions of a group within society (*einer gesellschaftlichen Gruppe*)'.[49] It is the direct ancestor of certain later nationalisms in countries like Poland and Hungary, where the idea of a nation of Magyars and Poles could accommodate, without the slightest difficulty, the fact that a large part of the inhabitants of the lands under the crown of St Stephen or of the Polish Commonwealth were not Magyars or Poles by any modern national definition. For these plebeians counted no more than the plebeians who happened to be Magyars and Poles. They were by definition outside the enclosure of the 'political nation'. And in any case that 'nation' must not be confused with modern nationality.[50]

Obviously the concept and vocabulary of 'the political nation' could eventually be extended to a nation assumed to consist of the mass of a country's inhabitants, though almost certainly this happened much later than retrospective nationalism would have it. Moreover the links between the two were almost certainly indirect, for while there is plenty of evidence that the common people in a kingdom could identify themselves with country and people through the supreme ruler, king or tsar – as Joan of Arc did – there is not much likelihood that peasants would identify with a 'country' that consisted of the community of the lords who were, inevitably, the chief targets of their discontents. If they happened to be attached and loyal to their particular lord, this would imply neither identification with the interests of the rest of the gentry, nor any attachment to any country larger than his and their home territory.

Indeed when in the pre-national era we encounter what would today be classified as an autonomous popular movement of

[49] Jenö Szücs, *Nation und Geschichte* (Budapest 1981), pp. 84–5.

[50] 'The nobility maintained systematic communications – the only class to do so – through their administrative disctricts and the Diet of estates where they, as "the Croatian political nation" debated issues and took decisions. It was a nation without "nationality" ... i.e. without national consciousness ... because the nobility could not identify with other members of the Croatian ethnic community, the peasants and townsmen. The feudal "patriot" loved his "fatherland" but his fatherland embraced the estates and possessions of his peers and the "Kingdom." To him "the political nation" of which he was a member meant the territory and traditions of the former state.' Mirjana Gross, 'On the integration of the Croatian nation: a case study in nation-building', *East European Quarterly*, xv, 2, June 1981, p. 212.

national defence against foreign invaders, as in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century central Europe, its ideology seems to have been social and religious but *not* national. Peasants appear to have argued that they had been betrayed by the nobles whose duty as *bellatores* should have been to defend them against the Turks. Perhaps they had a secret agreement with the invaders? It was thus left to the common people to defend the true faith against paganism by means of a crusade.[51] Such movements might under certain circumstances create the basis of a broader popular national patriotism, as in Hussite Bohemia – the original Hussite ideology was not Czech-national – or on the military frontiers of Christian states among a peasantry armed and set relatively free for the purpose. The cossacks, as we have seen, are a case in point. However, where state tradition did not provide it with a firm and permanent framework, such popular grassroots patriotism cannot usually be seen as growing over continuously into modern national patriotism.[52] But of course it was rarely expected to by governments of the old regime. The duty of the subject in such regimes, other than those specifically charged with military duties, was obedience and tranquillity, not loyalty or zeal. Frederick the Great indignantly refused the offer of his loyal Berliners to help him defeat the Russians who were about to occupy his capital, on the ground that wars were the business of soldiers, not civilians. And we all remember the reaction of emperor Francis II to the guerrilla rising of his faithful Tyroleans: 'Today they are patriots for me, tomorrow they may be patriots against me.'

Nevertheless, in one way or another membership of a historic (or actual) state present or past, can act directly upon the consciousness of the common people to produce proto-nationalism – or perhaps even, as in the case of Tudor England, something close to modern patriotism. (It would be pedantic to refuse this label to Shakespeare's propagandist plays about English history; but of course we are not entitled to assume that the groundlings read into them what we do.) There is no reason to deny proto-national feelings to pre-nineteenth-century Serbs, not because they were Orthodox as against neighbouring Catholics and Muslims – this

[51] Szücs, *Nation und Geschichte*, pp. 112–25. [52] *Ibid.* pp. 125–30.

would not have distinguished them from Bulgars – but because the memory of the old kingdom defeated by the Turks was preserved in song and heroic story, and, perhaps more to the point, in the daily liturgy of the Serbian church which had canonized most of its kings. That there was a Tsar in Russia undoubtedly helped Russians to see themselves as something like a nation. The potential popular appeal of a state tradition for modern nationalism, whose object it is to establish the nation as a territorial state, is obvious. It has led some such movements to reach far back beyond the real memory of their peoples in the search for a suitable (and suitably impressive) national state in the past, as in the case of the Armenians, whose last sufficiently important kingdom is to be found not later than the first century BC, or the Croats, whose nationalists saw themselves (implausibly) as the heirs of the noble 'Croatian political nation'. As always, the content of nineteenth-century national propaganda is an unreliable guide to what the rank and file of the common people actually thought before they began to adhere to the national cause.[53] This is not, of course, to deny that proto-national identification, on which later nationalism could build, existed among Armenians or, though probably to a distinctly smaller extent, pre-nineteenth-century Croat peasants.

Nevertheless, where there are, or appear to be continuities between proto-nationalism, they may well be quite factitious. There is no historical continuity whatever between Jewish proto-nationalism and modern Zionism. The German inhabitants of the holy land Tyrol became a sub-variety of German nationalists in our century, and indeed enthusiastic supporters of Adolf Hitler. But this process, which has been excellently analysed in the literature, has no intrinsic connexion with the Tyrolean popular rising of 1809 under the (ethnic and linguistic German) inn-keeper Andreas Hofer, even though pan-German nationalists think otherwise.[54] Sometimes indeed we can see the total non-congruence of proto-nationalism and nationalism even when the two exist simultaneously and in combination. The literate champions and organizers

[53] Failure to allow for this adequately makes I. Banac's otherwise excellent discussion less persuasive on the Croatian aspect of the problem.

[54] Cole and Wolf, *The Hidden Frontier*, pp. 53, 112–13.

of Greek nationalism in the early nineteenth century were undoubtedly inspired by the thought of ancient Hellenic glories, which also aroused the enthusiasm of educated, i.e. classically educated, philhellenes abroad. And the national literary language constructed by and for them, the Katharevousa, was and is a high-flown neo-classical idiom seeking to bring the language of the descendants of Themistocles and Pericles back to their true heritage from the two millennia of slavery which had corrupted it. Yet the real Greeks who took up arms for what turned out to be the formation of a new independent nation-state, did not talk ancient Greek any more than Italians talk Latin. They talked and wrote Demotic. Pericles, Aeschylus, Euripides and the glories of ancient Sparta and Athens meant little if anything to them, and insofar as they had heard of them, they did not think of them as relevant. Paradoxically, they stood for Rome rather than Greece (*romaiosyne*), that is to say they saw themselves as heirs of the Christianized Roman Empire (i.e. Byzantium). They fought as Christians against Muslim unbelievers, as Romans against the Turkish dogs.

Nevertheless it is evident – if only from the Greek example just cited – that proto-nationalism, where it existed, made the task of nationalism easier, however great the differences between the two, insofar as existing symbols and sentiments of proto-national community could be mobilized behind a modern cause or a modern state. But this is far from saying that the two were the same, or even that one must logically or inevitably lead into the other.

For it is evident that proto-nationalism alone is clearly not enough to form nationalities, nations, let alone states. The number of national movements, with or without states, is patently much smaller than the number of human groups capable of forming such movements by current criteria of potential nationhood, and certainly smaller than the number of communities with a sense of belonging together in a manner which is hard to distinguish from the proto-national. And this despite the fact that (even if we leave aside the question of self-determination for the 1,800 inhabitants of the Falkland Islands or Malvinas) serious claims to independent statehood have been made by populations as small as the 70,000 who fight for an independent Saharan nation or the 120,000 or so

who have virtually declared independence for the Turkish part of Cyprus. One must agree with Gellner that the apparent universal ideological domination of nationalism today is a sort of optical illusion. A world of nations cannot exist, only a world where some potentially national groups, in claiming this status, exclude others from making similar claims, which, as it happens, not many of them do. If proto-nationalism were enough, a serious national movement of the Mapuche or Aymara would have appeared by now. If such movements were to appear tomorrow it would be because other factors had intervened.

In the second place, while a proto-national base may be desirable, perhaps even essential, for the formation of serious state-aspiring national movements – though in itself not sufficient to create them – it is *not* essential for the formation of national patriotism and loyalty once a state has been founded. As has been often observed, nations are more often the consequence of setting up a state than they are its foundation. The USA and Australia are obvious examples of nation-states *all* of whose specific national characteristics and criteria of nationhood have been established since the late eighteenth century, and indeed could not have existed before the foundation of the respective state and country. However, we need hardly remind ourselves that the mere setting up of a state is not sufficient in itself to create a nation.

Finally, and as always, a word of warning is in order. We know too little about what went on, or for that matter what still goes on, in the minds of most relatively inarticulate men and women, to speak with any confidence about their thoughts and feelings towards the nationalities and nation-states which claim their loyalties. The real relations between proto-national identification and subsequent national or state patriotism must often remain obscure for this reason. We know what Nelson meant when he signalled his fleet on the eve of the battle of Trafalgar that England expected every man to do his duty, but not what passed through the minds of Nelson's sailors on that day, even if it would be quite unreasonable to doubt that some of it could be described as patriotic. We know what national parties and movements read into the support of such members of the nation as give them their

backing, but not what these customers are after as they purchase the collection of very miscellaneous goods presented to them as a package by the salesmen of national politics. Sometimes we can be fairly clear about what parts of the content they do not want – e.g. in the case of the Irish people, the universal use of the Gaelic language – but such silent selective referenda are rarely possible. We are constantly running the risk of giving the people marks in terms of a syllabus they have not studied and an examination they are not taking.

Suppose, for instance, we take the readiness to die for the fatherland as an index of patriotism, as seems plausible enough and as nationalists and national governments have naturally been inclined to do. We would then expect to find that William II's and Hitler's soldiers, who were presumably more open to the national appeal, fought more bravely than the eighteenth-century Hessians, hired out as mercenaries by their prince, who presumably were not so motivated. But did they? And did they fight better than, say, the Turks in World War I, who can hardly yet be regarded as national patriots? Or the Gurkhas who, fairly evidently, have not been motivated by either British or Nepalese patriotism? One formulates such fairly absurd questions not to elicit answers or stimulate research theses, but to indicate the denseness of the fog which surrounds questions about the national consciousness of common men and women, especially in the period before modern nationalism unquestionably became a mass political force. For most nations even in western Europe this did not happen until rather late in the nineteenth century. Then, at least, the choice became clear even though, as we shall see, its content was not.